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A

TREATISE

CONCERNING THE

LORD'S SUPPER.

WITH

THREE DIALOGUES,

FOR THE MORE FULL INFORMATION OF THE WEAK, IN  
THE NATURE AND USE OF THIS

SACRAMENT.

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I COR. xi. 24. THIS DO IN REMEMBRANCE OF ME.

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BY THOMAS DOOLITTLE.

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THE TWENTY-SECOND EDITION.

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GLASGOW:

PRINTED BY NAPIER AND KHULL,

FOR J. STEELL, & CO. BOOKSELLERS,

KING-STREET.

1798

## ADVERTISEMENT.

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THE EDITOR of this Edition, in consequence of having procured a copy of the Author's first Edition, assures the Public, that it has enabled him to make considerable additions, as there have been whole sentences and lines kept out of most of the Editions that have been printed since the Author's death.



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THE  
EPISTLE TO THE READER.

CHRISTIAN READER,

**T**O get assurance of the love of God and eternal life, should be thy great work and business in this world, else how can'st thou die with comfort, whilst thou art doubting whether thy departing soul shall be damned or saved? Live with God, or devils eternally? If when thou must bid farewell to all things in this world for ever, and enter into an unchangeable, everlasting state of joy, or torments in another world, thou knowest not which must be thy portion? What then can all thy friends do for thee? What comfort can thy riches, honours, bring into thy heart at such a time as this, when thou hast not secured thy eternal happiness?

For this end God hath given to fallen man his word whereby he might understand his misery, and how he came into it: the remedy, and how he might get out of it, by making known the conditions and terms, upon which he is freely willing to receive sinners into his love and favour, and confer upon them gospel privileges here, and eternal glorious life hereafter, and hath set to his seal, for a firm conveyance of these great eternal blessings, upon such reasonable, free and holy terms, as are propounded in the gospel.

But after such love and grace of God to man appeared, for his happiness and comfort, how great an enemy is man to his real happiness, and well-grounded comfort? One to his happiness, when he will not come up to the terms of his salvation; another to his comfort when he hath consented to, and accepted of the condition thereof, neglects the ratifying seal of the covenant of grace. A third to both, while he increaseth his sin, and false deluding comforts, by a preposterous coming for the seal, before he hath performed the conditions of this covenant.

And indeed the long absence of some believers from, and the careless hasting of all ungodly, to the Supper of the Lord, is much to be lamented. The former being straitly charged by the Lord, "to do this in remembrance of him," yet will not: The latter threatened with damnation if they do, yet will. The former, whom God hath habitually prepared for it, and it for them, and yet will not come, are in danger of being cut off, because they do not, Numb. ix. 13. The latter being neither prepared for it, nor it for them, (while such) are in danger of being cut down by death, if they do, 1 Cor. xi. 30. The one neglects this means of their spiritual growth, and slights the love, and forget the words of their dying Lord, as tho' they could thrive in grace, while they do neglect their spiritual food: The other neglecting the means of their spiritual birth, forget the words of the apostle, "Let a man examine himself, and so let him eat of that bread, and drink of that cup:" As tho' food converted into poison, could make a dead man live. The one dare not omit to pray, and lead an holy life, and yet will not come to wash their hearts: The other will not pray, nor lead a holy life, and yet will come to embrace their hands in the blood of Christ. Such is the unthankfulness of some, that should, but do not; and the wickedness of some that do, but should not come unto the gospel feast.

Now to prevent these two great evils for the time to come, (as it might prove, at least I hope, to some, that might peruse this little Treatise,) in which something is said to provoke the one to their duty, and deter the other from their sin and danger.

And because the best are too slight in their preparation for, and the weak unskillful in, and in some measure come short of living suitably to the Sacrament: something is contained herein, to excite thy slothful heart to greater seriousness and diligence in preparation before thou comest, and how it should be done: something for direction, how thou shouldest behave thyself when thou art there; and the manner how particular graces are to be acted for the better improving of this Ordinance; and something to direct thee what thou art to do, when thou comest from

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thence: How thou mightest know, whether thou art the better or the worse; and what thou art to do, which of either be thy case. To which are annexed Three Dialogues concerning the Lord's Supper, for the help of those that are the weaker sort of Christians that do desire to partake thereof. The first, between a Minister and a private Christian, that desires to partake of the Lord's Supper. The second, between a weak believer, that dares not come to, and a strong believer, that dares not absent himself from the Lord's Supper. The third, between one believer that hath assurance, and another that hath hopes; and another that is under doubtings of the love of God, and of good by the Sacrament, as they come away from the Lord's Table: in all which, if thou findest any thing profitable to thy soul, and tending to promote the work of grace wrought in thy heart, and thy fitness for, and to help thee in this duty, give God the glory; but where thou findest any thing that savoureth of the weakness of the author, do not censure, but pray for him, who is willing according to his own talent he hath received from the Lord, to further thee in the way to heaven and eternal life,

THOMAS DOOLITTLE.

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A T R E A T I S E  
CONCERNING THE  
L O R D's S U P P E R.

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1 Cor. xi. 23, 24, 25, &c. *The Lord Jesus, the same night in which he was betrayed, took bread: And when He had given thanks, He brake it, and said, Take eat, this is my Body, which is broken for you: this do in remembrance of me.*

*After the same manner also He took the cup when He had supped, saying, This cup is the New Testament in my blood: this do ye, as often as ye drink it, in remembrance of me, &c.*

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C H A P. I.

*Containing the explication of the text, as the general conclusions handled in this treatise.*

**T**HE riches of the goodness and love of God, were exceeding abundant towards man in his first creation, when God brought him out of the state of nothing, and advanced him to the excellency of the human nature, capable not only of ruling his fellow-creatures in this world, but of knowing and conversing with his Lord Creator: Who was graciously pleased to condescend to enter into a covenant with his then innocent creature, that upon condition of his perfect obeying the



will of his Maker, (which he had then power to perform,) he should continue in that state of happiness. But great were the riches of his mercy to man fallen from so great happiness to so great misery, in making a covenant of grace, establishing it in the blood of his Son, adding his oath, annexing his seal for the confirmation of our faith, that we should upon condition of believing, be partakers of the great and glorious privileges purchased by Christ, promised in the scripture, sealed in this sacrament: concerning which the apostle spends the latter part of this chapter: 1. In reproving the Corinthians for their abuse and profanation thereof; in that some that were contentious, and some that were vitious, even when they were drunken did approach thereto: Who degrading themselves below the rank of men, could not well then act their reason, when they should have acted faith, and love, and other graces. It is an heinous sin, that those that are reeling in the street, should be seen sitting at the sacramental table. 2. In reducing them to the primitive institution, in which there is no observation.

1. The Author of this ordinance, is the Lord Jesus Christ, he alone hath power and authority for the appointing of ordinances in his church, and for the instituting of significant sacramental signs: He is the king and prophet of his church, and hath not left it to his officers at their will and pleasure, to introduce any thing that is a part of holy worship: For Christ was neither short in wisdom, that he could not, nor in goodness, that he would not appoint whatsoever was sufficient

for the edifying of his church, and the comfort of his people: "Moses was admonished of God, when he was about to make the tabernacle, that he should make all things according to the pattern shewed to him in the mount," Heb. viii. 5. Exod. xxv. 40. And Paul delivered nothing but what he had received of the Lord.

2. The time when this ordinance was appointed by our Lord Jesus, "That same night in which he was betrayed," when he was so near unto his death, and knew all that was to be done unto him, and suffered by him, whereby you might perceive the greatness of the love of your dying Lord, that when he was so full of sorrow, he made provision for your comfort: And the excellency of this sacrament, that had its original from Christ, when he was so near his end, that should be for the maintaining of his people's spiritual life, which was ordained of him, now drawing near to death. Great and weighty things take up the thoughts of wise and serious dying men: That sure is great and weighty which our dying Lord ordained at such a time as this.

3. The external elements and signs, bread and wine: In sacraments there is something seen, and something understood; something perceived by sense, and something apprehended by faith: Sacraments are glasses for our understanding, and monuments for our memories, that by mean and visible signs, we might perceive and call to mind sublime and invisible things. Here is bread, even bread of life to fill the hungry soul, and wine to satisfy the thirsty, and to cheer the drooping soul.

4. The sacramental actions: 1. Of Christ, He took the bread and blessed it, and brake it: He took the cup and blessed it, and did distribute both. 2. Of the receivers, who are to take and eat, to take and drink: Christ is the giver, Christ is the gift: And what Christ in love doth give, believers with joy and thankfulness shall receive.

5. The explication of this mystery, "This is my body, This cup is the New Testament in my blood:" The bread was not turned into Christ's real body, nor the wine into his blood: For did the disciples eat Christ's real body, when he was with them at the table? Or did they drink his real blood which then was in his veins, and in his body, and not in the cup? Or did they not then see that Christ's real body and blood, was really distinct from the bread and wine? And did they not see it was real bread, and taste it was real bread, and handle it as real bread? Or is now Christ's glorious body subject to corruption, as is the bread that is in the sacrament, and when it is received? Or can a finite body be in heaven and upon earth, in so many places at once, as the sacrament might be administered in at the same time? Or do drunkards and swearers, hypocrites and unbelievers, really eat and drink Christ's real body and blood? The meaning is, this is a sign of my body, and a sign of my blood, the communion of both: As circumcision is said to be the covenant, so the bread is Christ's body, Gen. xvii. 10. "This is my covenant that you shall keep between me and you, and thy seed after thee, Every man child among you shall be circumcised." But yet

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circumcision was not the covenant, but a sign and seal thereof, Rom. iv. 11. "And he (that is, Abraham,) received the sign of circumcision a seal of the righteousness of the faith, which he had yet being uncircumcised: So the cup in the sacrament is said to be the New Testament, or covenant; but it is not the very covenant, but the sign and seal thereof.

6. The application of this unto its proper subject: Christ declaring who they be, that this, and the things signified do belong unto, "Which is broken for you." It is according to the mind of Christ that believers in the Lord's supper should make particular application of himself, and of the fruits of his death and sufferings to themselves: A believer may take the bread and say, The Lord Jesus died for me, and the wine, and say, Christ Jesus shed his blood for me.

7. A plain injunction given to believers to celebrate this ordinance, "Do this."

8. The frequency of attending upon God at his table, "As often as ye do this."

9. The end for which we should approach unto the table of the Lord, "Do this in remembrance of me." Whenever we celebrate the Lord's supper, we commemorate the Lord's death.

10. The time how long this ordinance must be used in the church, "Till the Lord shall come." The Lord will come, and till then this sacrament must continue; but when he comes and takes us to himself into his glorious kingdom, we shall need this and other ordinances no more: When the end is attained, the means shall cease: But as



the sacraments of the Old Testament did continue till Christ's first coming in the flesh; so the sacraments of the New Testament shall continue till Christ's second coming in glory.

11. A serious admonition of the apostle, that those that come to this ordinance be careful how they eat of this bread, and drink of this cup, ver.

27. "Wherefore, whosoever shall eat this bread, and drink this cup of the Lord unworthily, shall be guilty of the body and blood of the Lord." Unworthy receiving is a great aggravation of their sin and guilt, who shall presume in their hearts so to do.

12. A suitable direction to a right use of this ordinance, to prevent that great wickedness and crying sin of being guilty of Christ's body and blood, verse 28. "But let a man examine himself, and so let him eat of that bread, and drink of that cup."

13. The dreadfulnes of the punishment that they be in danger of, that come unworthily; and this is either temporal, verse 30. "For this cause many are weak and sickly among you, and many sleep:" that is, are dead: or eternal, without repentance, ver. 29. "For he that eateth and drinketh unworthily, eateth and drinketh damnation to himself." Which word is used to signify as well eternal damnation, as temporal judgments; and if any man be damned for unworthy receiving, it will be great damnation.

14. One cause or reason specified, why some do eat and drink unworthily, ver. 29. "Not discerning the Lord's body:" Not distinguishing

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betwixt this and common bread. Thus you have the parts contained in the verses of this chapter, that concern the institution of the Lord's supper, and the apostle's doctrine, in order to a right receiving of the same.

In this little treatise, I shall not endeavour to take in the whole doctrine of the sacrament, because many learned and holy men (whose shoes I am not worthy to untie,) have written concerning the nature, use, and ends thereof, the qualifications of the persons that have an immediate right thereto: The graces that are to be exercised therein, which are to be drawn forth into action by seeing the sacramental representation, by considering the sacramental actions: Of the minister that stands in Christ's stead, in taking, breaking, and distributing: Of the receivers in taking, eating, and drinking; all which are signs of something spiritual, not discerned by unworthy receivers; by believing and applying of sacramental promises, "this is my body which is broken for you." But what I shall speak, shall be comprised in some following conclusions, for the preventing of these following evils.

1. Some who are truly gracious, do live long in the neglect of this heart-warming affection, inflaming grace, strengthening ordinance: Some that have no right to it, will not be excluded from it, but count that minister their greatest enemy, that would willingly prevent their being guilty of the blood of the Lord: Others whom God calls, and hath prepared it for, will not be prevailed with to come unto it.

2. Some that tho' they do approach unto it, yet it is but very seldom.

3. Some that do come, and that often, are too careless and remiss, that they do not endeavour to prepare themselves, as a work of that weight and consequence doth require: And herein some of God's own people are blame worthy.

4. Some while they be actually engaged in that duty, do not rightly consider the blood of Christ therein, nor act their graces therein.

5. Some that are partakers of the Lord's supper, do not enquire after participation, what benefit they have received thereby. In opposition to which evils, I shall lay down those conclusions, bottomed upon some particular passages in the chapter.

1. *Conclusion.* That it is a necessary duty incumbent upon all adult believers, to partake of the Lord's supper, ver. 24. "This do in remembrance of me."

2. *Con.* That it is the duty of Christ's disciples often to partake of the Lord's supper, ver. 25. "This do ye, as oft as ye drink it, in remembrance of me. ver. 26. For as often as ye eat this bread, and drink this cup, ye do shew forth the Lord's death till he come."

3. *Con.* That whensoever ye are to partake of the Lord's supper, you are to be painful and serious in making preparation for it, ver. 28. "But let a man examine himself, and so let him eat of that bread, and drink of that cup."

4. *Con.* That a believer should eye the blood of Christ in the Lord's supper, in the several pro-

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perties, virtue, and efficacy of it, till suitable graces thereby are drawn forth into act and lively exercise, ver. 24. "This is my body, which is broken for you: this do in remembrance of me, ver. 25. This cup is the New Testament in my blood: this do ye, as often as ye drink it, in remembrance of me."

5. *Con.* That such as are partakers of the Lord's supper, should enquire after participation, what benefit they have received thereby, whether they be the better, or the worse by receiving, ver. 17. "Now, in this that I declare unto you, I praise you not, that you come together not for the better, but for the worse." I begin with the first.

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## CHAP II.

*Containing the first conclusion and explication thereof.*

1. **I**T is a necessary duty incumbent upon all adult believers to partake of the Lord's supper, 1. Necessary, as it is opposed to arbitrary: It is not left to the pleasure of the people of God, that if they will, they may, if they will not, they may refuse: But as it is their privilege that they may, so it is their duty that they must receive it: We may, and we must pray; we may, and we must hear: So we may, and we must receive. Yet it is my observation, that the same Christians that are much troubled if they omit praying, and hearing, and reading the word of God, and their conscience doth accuse them for the neglect of these, yet have for a long season absented themselves

from the table of the Lord, and seldom put the neglect thereof amongst their confession of sins, as if it were not a sin of omission, and made them not guilty before the Lord.

2. I say it is a necessary duty: Not necessary to the being and essence of a Christian, for that is supposed: For conversion must go before participation of this holy ordinance, which is not appointed of God to beget, but to increase grace: And grace must be in truth, before it can receive its growth by any ordinance. Dead men must not sit down at the table of the living God: Here men come to Christ, and faith is the foot of the soul: Here men must receive Christ, and faith is the hand of the soul: Here men must feed upon Christ, and faith is the mouth of the soul. It would be more seemly to set a dead man at our table, than that a man dead in sin should sit down at the table of the Lord. It is children's bread, and must not be given unto dogs. But there is a degree of necessity of this ordinance for the more comfortable being of a Christian; you must then bring some grace with you, and come hither for more; you must bring some faith, and love, and hope, and come hither to have more degrees of all these: growth supposeth life.

3. I say, it is necessary, but not absolutely to salvation; because where there is faith in Christ, love to God, and real implacable hatred unto sin, there is at least an objective certainty of salvation, and may be a subjective certainty without it, though not so usual, nor so full and constant, if it be willingly neglected, where opportunity of

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receiving it is afforded: For the wilful neglect of this duty doth administer just ground of jealousy, whether our obedience be true, because universal unto all God's commands; and therefore not universal, because it extends not unto this, "Do this in remembrance of me." A believer without this sacrament may be sure of heaven especially where opportunity or participation is denied: But a believer that may receive it, and yet lives in the neglect of it, will not be so fully, well grounded by, comfortably sure that he is sure of heaven.

4. I say, necessary, being so by God's command: What God enjoins, is not arbitrary unto us; nor indifferent whether we will do it or no.

5. I say, it is a duty of believers, that are adult, and have the use of reason: So it is not incumbent upon infants, and distracted persons, because they are not capable of the condition and antecedent duty unto this, viz. Self-examination. A diligent, strict examination; 1. Of our state, whether in Christ, or no. 2. Of our sins, both of heart and life. 3. Of our want. 4. Of our graces, of repentance for sin, faith in Christ, love to God, obedience, and a firm and a holy purpose of walking with God, must precede the participation of this ordinance; and therefore such persons as may have grace in the habits, and in no measure capable of self-examination, as may be the case of some infants, and distracted persons, lie not under an obligation to celebrate this ordinance: So much for the explication of this conclusion.



## CHAP. III.

*Shewing Christ's disciples must receive the Lord's supper.*

**T**HAT it is the necessary duty of believers to partake of the Lord's supper. I prove.

*First*, There is the same parity of reason that believers under the gospel should receive the Lord's supper, as the Israelites under the law should eat the Lord's passover. This was their duty as is prescribed, Exod. xii. where is the first institution, the manner how, the end for which, and the command for it is again renewed, Numb. ix. 1, 2, 3. And if any man were unclean that he could not keep it the first month, yet he must the second; yea, God was much provoked by the neglect of the passover, Numb. ix. 13. "But the man that is clean, and is not in a journey, and forbeareth to keep the passover; even the same soul shall be cut off from his people, because he brought not the offering of the Lord in his appointed season: that man shall bear his sin." Here you see was guilt contracted, and punishment severe to be inflicted upon the person that should neglect to eat the Lord's passover. And there is as great reason for believers to eat the Lord's supper, as appears by the agreement betwixt them in these particulars:

*First*, In the author and efficient cause, God appointed both.

*Secondly*, In the matter principally signified in both, and that is Christ; and the same benefits and privileges held forth and conveyed to be-

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lievers in both, as remission of sin, justification, and spiritual nourishment, and growth in grace.

*Thirdly*, In the end, to commemorate the mercy and goodness of God, in the deliverance of his people from captivity of sin, and bondage of the devil.

*Fourthly*, In the instrument of receiving and applying the thing signified by both, and that is faith.

*Fifthly*, In the parts in both, something a sign, and something signified.

*Sixthly*, In the properties of the Paschal Lamb, which are in Christ our passover.

1. That was to be without blemish: so was Christ, Isa. liii. 9. 1 Pet. i. 19, 20, 22. Heb. vii. 26.

2. That must be a male: so Christ for sex and strength, a mighty Saviour, Jer. xxxi. 32.

3. That must be of a year old, in perfect age: Christ about thirty-four years, in the prime of his age.

4. That must be taken out of the flock: Christ must be taken from among mankind, that was partaker of flesh and blood, Deut. xviii. 18. Heb. ii. 11.

5. That must be separated from the flock: Christ was separated from sinners, Heb. vii. 26.

6. That roast with fire: Christ with the heat of God's wrath.

7. That must be eaten: Christ must be received of by faith. That must be eaten.

1. By every family: Christ is to be received by every person.

2. With unleavened bread: Christ and this sacrament is to be received in sincerity and truth, 1 Cor. v. 7, 8.

3. With bitter herbs, Christ and this ordinance, with bitter repentings.

4. Wholly, all of it must be eaten whole, Christ must be received in all his offices, prophet, priest, and king: Christ as the Paschal Lamb, must be received with all his appurtenances.

5. In haste, Christ must be received presently, without delay.

*Seventhly*, In the subject that must eat thereof, they were Israelites, and those that were circumcised. Those that should partake of this ordinance, ought to be Israelites indeed, and circumcised in their hearts, if they would have benefit thereby. Thus you see the great agreement betwixt those two ordinances: And were the Jews bound to observe that, and not believers under the gospel engaged unto this? Nay, I may argue that there is great reason why we should be more forward to this duty, in as much, wherein they differ, this more excellent, As,

1. In the manner of their signification; the passover signified Christ that was to come; the Lord's supper, Christ already come.

2. In the duration. The passover was to continue till the coming of Christ in the flesh: The Lord's supper till he come again in glory, in the end of the world.

3. In the perspicuity and clearness: In the former Christ's death was signified more darkly; in the latter more plainly.

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Now I beseech you, see what the passover was to the Jews, and consider what the Lord's supper is to us, and there will appear the same parity of reason for our receiving of this, as for the Jews eating of that.

*Secondly*, It is the plain injunction of our dying Lord, that we should do this in remembrance of him. Why do ye pray? One reason you will give is, because God commands: And if you pray because God commands it; and if you must then do every thing that God commands you; and so this, is it not strictly commanded? Read Luke xxii. 19. The whole is commanded, "This do in remembrance of me." Mat. xxvi. 26, 27. the particular acts are commanded. "Take, eat, drink," and will you say, You will not? Will not become a disciple of Christ, you say not, Will not? But you know you do not, and that is as bad.

*Thirdly*, Christ did ordain it for this very end, that believers should have a remembrance of him in the partaking of this ordinance: We are apt to forget the works of God, Psal. cvi. 13. Too apt to forget the benefits we received from God, Psal. ciii. 2. But which is most to be wondered at, we are too prone to forget God our Saviour, to forget him that delivered us from the curse of the law, by being made a curse for us: from the wrath of God, by bearing it himself? from the sting of death, by dying for us, Psal. cvi. 21. "They forgot God their Saviour." Oh, what memories have we that can remember our relations, our worldly affairs, and forget that God made us, and Christ that did redeem us. Now



Christ would live in our thoughts and memory, and to heal and help the slippriness thereof, hath instituted this ordinance, which you cannot partake of aright, but you must remember him. Or will you say you remember Christ without this! That you have no need to use this ordinance for that end? Why then, tell Christ so, if you dare: What is this but to correct the wisdom of your Lord by your own folly? But I tell you, you cannot so well remember Christ without this ordinance, as you may by a careful, frequent attendance upon God in it: for it is not a speculative, historical remembrance that he did bleed and die; for so the devils themselves remember Christ's death: Not as a scholar may remember his notions; but the remembrance that Christ would have in your thoughts, is,

1. An affectionate remembrance, that the sight of your eye should affect your heart; that you should so remember him, as to love, desire, and delight in him.

2. A sorrowful remembrance, that you should remember him so, that your heart should break and your eye should weep. When you remember your sins was the Judas that betrayed him, your sins were the spears that pierced his blessed side, and let out the blood from his holy heart; that were the thorns that crowned him, and the nails that fastened him to the cross. When David would sorrow for his sins, he penneth a Psalm, which he intitles, "A Psalm to bring to remembrance," Psal. xxxviii. And when you would have your heart to sorrow afresh for your pride

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and unbelief, and other sins, go to the sacrament, which is a sacrament to bring to remembrance. There remember the dignity and innocency of the Sufferer, the greatness of his sufferings, 1. From God. 2. From men. 3. From devils. The causes of his sufferings, your own wicked doings, and this will help you to a sorrowful remembrance of your sins.

3. A joyful and thankful remembrance, you must look upon your sins, and be troubled that you have done that which put Christ to death, and you must here look upon Christ, and rejoice, that by his death he hath taken away the sins that you had done against God.

4. A fiducial remembrance, that you may so remember Christ as to trust in him, and rely upon him, and cast the care of your souls upon him.

5. A silent remembering, and many so remember Christ, as to silence all the clamours of an accusing devil, and an accusing conscience; and every one that would lay any thing unto your charge, when you remember Christ's death, it will furnish you with suitable supplies to all charges laid upon you. The devil will accuse you of sins before and since conversion and you cannot deny them; but you may remember Christ's death, and say, it is true, I did so, but Christ hath borne my iniquities in his body upon the cross; what now, O mine enemy? He will tell you of your sins of omission, of commission, and you cannot deny them; but you may reply, Christ hath undergone the punishment that was due to me for them: What now, oh mine enemy! The law of God will accuse and curse

you for the breaches thereof that you have made and you cannot deny them; but here you may remember Christ, and say, that he hath perfectly obeyed the law and satisfied for your breaking of the law, and may be comforted. Your own conscience will accuse you, but here you may remember Christ's death, and conscience is answered, and rightly quieted. Thus the remembrance of Christ's death will answer all charges, Rom. viii. 33, 34. And will you yet neglect it?

6. A sin-loathing remembrance. You will not only mourn for sin, but loath it too; when you do this in remembrance of Christ, you will abhor the knife that killed your Father, and the sin that killed your Lord, when you remember him and it. Now you cannot have such a remembrance of Christ as this, so well without the Lord's supper, as with it: except you will unadvisedly and wickedly charge Christ with a superfluous institution of a needless means that hath no tendency in it to beget such a remembrance of him in your thoughts, and whom will you delight to remember, if not your Lord! Who shall live in your thoughts, if not your Saviour and Redeemer? And how will you thus remember him, if you do neglect the means appointed by him for the attaining of this end? Shall Christ himself bespeak you to do this in remembrance of him, saying, "Do this in remembrance of me!"

*First*, That came down from heaven to earth for your sake, and left the bosom and the glory of my Father, to be cloathed in rags of humanity for your sake, and will you not do it?

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*Secondly*, Shall he say, "Do this in remembrance of me," that led a life of suffering, from the manger in which I lay, to the cross on which I hung, and will you not do it?

*Thirdly*, Shall he say, "Do this in remembrance of me," that underwent a shameful, painful, cursed death for your sake, and will you not do it?

*Fourthly*, Shall he say, "Do this in remembrance of me," that was buried and rose again, for your sake, and will you yet neglect it?

*Fifthly*, Shall he say, "Do this in remembrance of me," that go from earth to heaven again, to prepare a place for you in glory, and take possession of the heavenly mansions for you, and will you yet absent yourself from it?

*Sixthly*, Shall he say, "Do this in remembrance of me," that am going to the right hand of God to interceed for you, to plead your cause with the Father, and will you yet turn back upon it?

*Seventhly*, Shall he say, "Do this in remembrance of me," who will come again at the last day, and openly absolve you before angels, men and devils; and will you yet slight it?

*Eighthly*, Shall he say, "Do this in remembrance of me," with whom you shall for ever be, with whom you shall for ever live, a holy, happy, blessed life; and will you yet be indifferent whether you do it or no? Nay, be backward to it? Oh, seriously weigh these things, and then say, though you have not done it all this while, yet now you will.

*Fourthly*, You are bound to use all means for

the increase of your grace, for the inflaming of your love, the strengthening of your faith, and the renewing of your repentance, and the subduing of your sin, and you sin if you do not. You cannot neglect it, but you increase your guilt. And would it not be better for you to go in a right manner, and have the pardon of your sin sealed to you, and your guilt removed from you, than by a constant neglect contract more guilt upon your souls? Are you not bound to grow in grace? or have you enough already? Do you not want more measures and degrees of faith and love, and hope? And can you neglect the means of growth, and yet grow? can you neglect your food, and yet be nourished? Or do you not sin, if you do not grow? And do you not sin, if you do neglect the means of growth? Think of this.

#### CHAP. IV.

*Containing twelve questions to these believers that neglect the Lord's Supper.*

**L**ET me proceed to shew you the aggravations of your long neglect of the Lord's supper. I pray you therefore tell me.

*Quest. 1.* Is not this to live in neglect of a plain commanded duty? You see it proved to be your duty, and is it nothing to you to live in a known sin? Nay, and to plead for it too? as you do for not coming to this ordinance: It may be it is because you doubt of your sincerity. And might not this increase your doubts, when you are partial in your obedience to God's commands?



*Quest. 2.* Is not this great hypocrisy, to complain of the hardness of your heart, and yet will not use the means to have it softened? To complain of the power of your sins, and yet will not bring them to the cross of Christ to have them mortified and subdued? Is not this great dissimulation, to run to ministers with complaints in your mouths, and tears in your eyes, because of the prevalency of corruption, and yet will not use the means for the further conquering of them? If it be so, why then do you complain? If it be so, will you not diligently and conscientiously use the means, that it might be better with you? Oh come, bring your hard heart unto the blood of Christ, and see if it will not soften it; bring your strong corruptions to this blood, and see if it will not weaken them?

*Quest. 3.* Is not this to set light by a special token of the love of your dying Lord? The nearer Christ was unto his death, the more lively were the discoveries of his love unto your souls; and will you take no more notice of it? Methinks Christ when he was to die, speaketh thus unto his people: You are they whom I have loved; you are they for whom I will do and die; you are they whom I will always think upon, and in whose thoughts I love to live: And because the hour of my death is come, and I must go away from you, therefore I will leave you a memorial of my death and love, that as oft as ye see it, you may remember me; when you behold it then think of me. And was Christ mindful of your good and comfort in that very night in which he was betrayed; and will you thus neglect and despise

it? If your most dear and special friend upon his death-bed had bequeathed you some token of his love, and said, When you behold this, then think of me, when I am dead and gone, would you throw it by, and never view it? Do not the expressions of your dying friends make a deeper and more lasting impression upon your heart and thoughts? And shall not the words and entreaties, and commands of your dying Lord?

*Quest. 4.* Is not this to disesteem a firm conveyance and assurance of all gospel blessings and benefits purchased by the death of Christ? Is not this ordinance God's broad seal, to confirm unto your souls the great and everlasting blessings of the covenant of grace? Would you be contented with the writings for your lands and houses, without a seal? or would you not desire a sealing-day, and be glad when it comes, that you may be the surer, and your title made more clear? And are not the pardon of your sins, and your title to the kingdom of God, greater things? And the assurance of these more infinitely more desirable? Or do you doubt you have them not, and yet will not come to have your evidences to be declared? This sacrament is a *signum rememorative*, to bring to your remembrance the passion of our Lord, where he would testify to your conscience, and assure you that he died for you: It is *Signum demonstrativum*, a demonstration of his love, where he would assure you that he loves you. It is *Signum prognosticum*, or *prænuntiativum*, a prognostic of your future and eternal happiness, where he would assure you, that you

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shall undoubtedly be partakers of it, and will you yet neglect it?

*Quest. 5.* Is not this too great a sign of the littleness of your love unto him? Did you love him, would you not desire to be there where he is wont to take his walk? Did you love him, would you not desire to eat and drink at his table, yea, to feast upon him? and to be there where you may find him, and where he manifests himself unto them that love him? Did you hunger after him, and thirst after him, would you not desire to be there where you may be filled and satisfied.

*Quest. 6.* Is not this too great a sign of your slighting communion with him, that you do not set so high a price and valuation of fellowship with him? or do you complain that you have it not, and yet will not come where you may have it?

*Quest. 7.* Is not this too great a sign that you set little by the comforts of the Spirit, and the warming joys of the Holy Ghost? Is it not here that God doth shed abroad his love into the hearts of true believers, and send them away with their hearts full of joy, and their mouths with praises? or, do you complain that you have no comfort, and that you are a stranger to spiritual joy? and yet will not come where you may not only have a taste, but drink full draughts of the well of consolation.

*Quest. 8.* Is not this to grieve the Spirit of God, and to make him more angry and displeased with you, and to withdraw himself further from your soul? Can God take it kindly at your hands, when he hath killed the fatted calf, and made

ready his marriage supper, and sent his servants forth to call you and invite you, and you turn your backs upon it? Do you not provoke him to leave your hearts to greater deadness, and let you go sorrowing to your grave, and never let you taste of the sweetness of these comforts till you get to heaven? or how can you complain, that God departeth from you, when you will not come nearer unto him: That he withdraweth from your souls, when you withdraw from your duty?

*Quest. 9.* Is not this too great a sign, that when you did receive it, you tasted not of the sweetness of it? And that you missed of the comfort and the benefit of it, that you have since so long neglected it? Do you think you have not cause to repent of your former receiving, when it did not leave an earnest longing in your soul to come again? Was it possible for you to meet with God, and taste the sweetness of the fulness of Christ, and not desire and long for the like opportunity again? Had you experimentally found the reaching forth of your love to God, and desires after him, and have tasted the sweetness of such actings of love and joy, could you have abstained so long?

*Quest. 10.* Is it not all one to you, if there had been no such ordinance appointed? What is it to you, if you receive it not? If it be a sacrament to others, yet it is not to you: If it be a seal to others, yet it is not unto you that live in the neglect of it. The lamb was not the passover, but the lamb killed, and roasted, and eaten, was the passover. Nay, let me tell you, it had been better for you if Christ had not ordained it at all; for you could then but have been without the

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benefit of it, and so you are now while you do neglect it: But then you would have been without that sin and guilt that now you contract by the forbearing of it.

*Quest. 11.* Is it not great unthankfulness in you thus to live in neglect of it? Can you be thankful unto Christ for adding seals unto his covenant, while you omit it? Have so many souls unfeignedly blessed God for this institution, and will you be guilty of too great ingratitude?

*Quest. 12.* Do you know what it is that you have lost by the neglecting it? And might it not have been much better with you in your spiritual condition, if you had frequently attended upon God therein? If there be any thing in the law and gospel to awake you first, and comfort you afterwards, this ordinance would have done it. Here you might have seen the deserts of sin, and the evil of transgressing the law of God, to rouze you out of your spiritual security: Here you might have had the cordials of the gospel to have comforted and revived your swooning soul under the affrightments and terrors of the law; if there be any thing in the wrath and love of God to work upon your heart, here you might have seen lively discoveries of both: Of God's wrath against sin in the death of Christ; of God's love towards the sinner in the death of Christ! Oh! you cannot tell what you have lost by omitting of it, what grace you have lost, what comforts and joys you have lost, that others have found in the frequent and conscientious use of this ever to be praised ordinance.

## CHAP. V.

*Containing some doubts of weak Christians that hinder them from receiving the Lord's Supper with a resolution of these doubts.*

**Doubt.** BUT you say, you question your right unto the Lord's supper, because you fear you are yet in a natural condition; and this is children's bread; it is bread of life, and he longeth only unto them that are living Christians that have indeed the life of grace.

*Sol.* 1. Either this is so indeed, or it is not; and let it be what it will, you do undoubtedly sin. If you be not fit, that is your sin; if you be in your natural condition, that is your sin, as well as your misery; and one sin will never excuse you from another. If it be so, why do you not forthwith look after Christ, and be fitted for it, and then come.

2. But do you not proceed upon a great mistake? for I hope better things of you, and things that accompany salvation; therefore I beseech you in the fear of God, after due debate and search into your soul, answer me these questions.

*First,* Do you not see yourself utterly lost and undone? Do you not see your misery out of Christ?

*Secondly,* Are you not sensible of the sins that brought you into this miserable condition? Is it not the burdens your soul groans under, and would willingly, heartily willingly be eased of it, as even a sick man was of his sickness, or prisoner of his

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chains? Doth it not grieve you, that your sins have been committed! and if they were to do again, by the grace of God you would not do them?

*Thirdly,* Do you conscientiously practise whatever you have been convinced is your duty; and dare not omit it when you know it? Do you give yourself to prayer and meditation, and other duties? and yet do you see the emptiness and insufficiency of them to justify you in the sight of God? that as you dare not omit them, so you dare not rest in them, nor rely upon them, because you see your prayers have need of pardon, and your tears have need of being washed in the blood of Christ? that you do get out of yourself, and seek for salvation in another? And therefore,

*Fourthly,* Do you not unfeignedly desire after Christ, and hunger and thirst for him and his righteousness? Are you not willing to accept of him upon any terms, upon his own conditions, for your Lord and Saviour? Are you not willing that he should sanctify as well as save you? and bring you into obedience as well as unto glory? Doth not your judgment value him above all? and you will choose him before all? and are not your affections of love, and desire, and joy, set upon him? If you doubt whether you love him? yet tell me whether you would love him? If you would, you do. If you doubt whether you have received him, yet tell me whether you are willing, unfeignedly willing to take him upon his own terms, and choose him for your treasure, and your happiness, and your chiefest joy? If you are willing

thus to receive him, you have received him; and so you are habitually prepared for this ordinance, and ought not to continue in the neglect of it.

*Doubt.* You say upon serious search, and find you are willing upon any terms to accept of Christ, you would have him to be your Lord and Saviour, you are willing to be his, to be ruled by him, to be made like to him, to have communion with him; but you fear Christ is not willing: You believe he is able to help and save you, and to give you grace and glory, but whether he be willing you do not know.

*Sol.* 1. That you should be willing and not Christ, is impossible: For as much as your willingness to accept of Christ, as a fruit of Christ's willingness to give and bestow himself upon you. I pray you tell me, is real and unfeigned willingness to be holy, to be like to God, to be in all things guided and directed by the Spirit, and the word of God, a flower that grows in nature's garden? Is not the will of man the great rebel against God, and the great opposer of the work of grace? Is it not the complaint of Christ against natural men, that they will not come to him, though thereby they may have life? John v. 40. "How often would I have gathered you, and you would not?" Mat. xxii. 37. You must therefore know, when the will is subdued, the greatest enemy in your soul against Christ and grace is subdued: And indeed when the will is wrought upon to choose Christ, to be willing to receive him, the work of saving conversion is wrought in that soul.

2. Do you say you are willing, and Christ is



not? That is your intolerable pride so to think and speak. It is usual with many dejected souls, that complain of their own unworthiness, and vileness, and sins, that loath and abhor themselves for their sins, the great work of humiliation, that yet have this insufferable pride remaining in them, that they are willing, but Christ is not. Indeed, have you such good thoughts of yourself, and such low, and mean, and bad thoughts of Christ? Is it not pride enough in you, to have better thoughts of yourself, than of other of your fellow Christians, but must you have higher thoughts of yourself than of your Saviour? or do you say you are worse than others, and yet in this advance yourself against God and Jesus Christ? It may be you never perceived so much pride to be at the bottom of such conceptions and expressions, that you are willing, but God is not willing, but Christ is not willing. O proud creature! proud sinner! proud mourner! Is not this to have too high and proud thoughts of yourself, to think you are more willing to receive good than God is to give it? to be good than God is to make you so? It is impossible that a sinner, that by nature is a bitter enemy to goodness and holiness, should be more willing to be made good and holy, than God that is by nature good and holy, and a lover of it, should be to make men so? Oh, fall upon your knees, and let these tears that you shed in lamenting your sad condition, that God is not willing to be yours, when you are willing to be his, be better spent in weeping for the pride of your heart in thinking you are willing to receive grace and Christ, and

he not willing to bestow himself, and it upon you.

3. If this might be, that a soul may be unfeignedly willingly to accept of Christ upon his own terms; and yet perish, then at the last day some might plead and appeal to God: "Lord, I was willing to be holy, but thou wast not willing to make me holy: I was willing to receive thee upon thine own terms, but thou wouldest not give thyself unto me, no not upon thine own terms! and I am not damned because I was not truly willing to be sanctified and renewed, but because Christ would reject me willing to come to him." But there shall not be a man that shall dare to open his mouth in this manner unto Christ at the last day.

4 But this will be manifest, that Christ is more willing than you, that he did die more willingly for you, than you can for him: He did die more willingly to make you holy, than you can for holiness sake, or for his sake, when you are made holy; hath he died for you, to purchase holiness, and grace and glory for you, and yet will you think that you are willing, and not Christ? Nay, Christ was more willing to die for you, than you are to live to him; and was he not yet willing? When think you Christ is not willing, think upon the sorrows, the shame, the sufferings he endured in his body, in his soul; how he sweated, as it were great drops of blood: Nay, bled and died for you, and then say no more you are willing, but Christ is not.

*Doubt.* But you will reply, if Christ died for

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me, I should not doubt but he is willing to give himself, and his grace, and his kingdom to me, but that is my fear in that I am not satisfied; and therefore I cannot in the sacrament commemorate his death, because I cannot see he died for me.

Sol. 1. If you be one of Christ's people, then he died for you; he died to save his people from their sins, Matth. i. 21. And you are one of his people, if you are made willing in the day of his power, Psal. ex. 3. "Thy people shall be willing in the day of thy power." Are you therefore willing to forsake every known sin? willing to perform every known duty? willing to bear every burden he shall lay upon you? willing to be what he would have you to be? Then you are one of his people, and you may be sure he died for you in particular.

2. If you are one of Christ's friends, then he died for you; and you are his friends, if you make conscience of doing whatever he commands you, and are grieved where you do come short, John xv. 13, 14.

3. If you are dead to sin, you cannot be mortified to sin, if Christ had not been crucified for you: sin had never been dead in you, if Christ had not died for you, Gal. vi. 4.

4. If you live to Christ, Christ died for you: if it be your care to walk in his ways, to do his will, and make him your end, and his glory your aim in all your actions, in the general scope of your life, Gal. ii. 20. 1 Pet. ii. 24. 2 Cor. v. 15.

## CHAP. VI.

*The second conclusion, shewing that believers must often receive the Lord's Supper.*

**T**HAT it is the duty of the disciples of Christ, often to partake of the Lord's supper.

Baptism is but once to be administered, but the Lord's supper is often to be received, the frequency of it is not determined, often it must be, how often is not expressed; if you had opportunity every Lord's day, and you redeemed and improved it, your soul may thrive and grow the more in grace and holiness: Meals that are for nourishment must be often; you often eat, and you often drink for the nourishment of nature, and yet it is not told you how often you must eat, how often you must drink, but the sense and feeling of the want of your food, will direct you unto this: So if you have but a sense and feeling of the want of this ordinance, and the things that are there to be conferred upon believers, that would guide you to a frequent iteration of this ordinance. Consider, therefore.

*First,* Do you not often stand in need of being washed in the blood of Christ? Do you not often defile yourself, and gather filth upon your soul? and should you not often apply yourself to the fountain of the cleansing blood of Jesus Christ?

*Secondly,* Do you not often blot out your evidences, and disturb your peace? and have you not need of the frequent use of that ordinance, wherein God might renew your evidence, and speak peace unto your conscience? Do you not often contract guilt, and should you not often come to have your

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pardon sealed and confirmed to your soul in the blood of Christ?

*Thirdly,* Do you not often need the means of spiritual warmth and quicknings? are you not often dull, and often dead, and often lukewarm? and do not those that are often sick, often need their physick to purge and make them well? If you are sometime warmed in an ordinance, doth not your affections abate again; that you have not that liveliness of affections, nor that reviving joy, which in the actual performance of the duty you did find; and is it needful to exhort you that have found the benefit of this ordinance to go often to it; Let the experience of what you have found in it, and the want you do ly under the seldom approaching unto it, quicken your desires after a frequent attendance upon God in it.

*Fourthly,* Do you not often need so great an help for the breaking and softning of your heart; for the renewing of your repentance for sin, and strengthening and confirming of your resolutions against it. Is not your heart too apt to fall in love with sin, and to renew its league with sin. Do you not often need to be put in remembrance of God's displeasure against it, his hatred that he bears unto it, and the dreadful effects and deserts thereof, and is not this done more lively in the Lord's supper. God's displeasure against sin is more discovered in the death of Christ, than in turning the angels out of heaven, or Adam out of paradise; or in the destruction of the old world, or in the burning of Sodom; or in the damnation of innumerable unbelieving and impenitent persons.

*Fifthly*, Do you not often need so great an help for the increasing of your love to God and Christ. Do you often complain that you love God no more, and will you not no more often use this so great a means for the encouraging of your love.

*Sixthly*, Do ye not often need so great an help, for the strengthening of your faith and hope, that you may be more able to make a particular application of Christ and his benefits to your soul, and to have a more lively hope of the kingdom of heaven.

*Seventhly*, Do you not often need so great an help, to put you in remembrance of your Lord Jesus. Are ye not too apt to forget him and his love in dying for you. Is he so much in your thoughts as he doth deserve; or is it enough to have some occasional thoughts of Christ; or should you not more solemnly dwell in your meditations upon him. And doth not the nature and the end of this ordinance lead and help you to fix your thoughts more permanently upon him, when you see how he was crucified and died for you.

*Eighthly*, Do you not often need so great an help to make you more thankful for the matchless love, wherewith he hath loved you, and the unparalleled blessings he hath purchased for you, and conferred upon you: Is it not a shame and sin, you are no more in praising God, and rejoicing in him for such privileges that were procured by the blood of his only Son, and your dearest Lord. And can you sit at his table, and not have your soul raised in the highest admiration of his love and mercy to you.

*Ninthly,* Do you not often need so great an help for the getting and maintaining of more intimate communion with God, and fellowship with Jesus Christ. Is it not here, that God doth abundantly set forth himself unto his people's hearts. Is it not here, that believers feel the going forth of their hearts in love unto him, and desires after him, and delight and joy in him. Do you complain you have so little of God, and will not more often go where you may receive more influences from him.

*Tenthly,* Do you not more often need so great an help for the closer knitting of your heart unto the people of God, in greater affection and love unto them. Do you love them as you should; or is there not too great an alienation of your heart and affection from them: or doth not this ordinance which shews you the love of Christ to all his people, incite them that attend upon it, to imitate the Lord Jesus in loving of them: "That we should love one another, as he hath loved us. When we see we are one bread, and redeemed by one Lord, and fed at one table, and are washed in the same blood, and enjoy the same privileges, and are here assured of the same inheritance and glory, doth it not engage us to be of one heart, and to be kindly affectionate one to another, as Christ was to us all. Though it is to be bewailed with tears of blood, that this ordinance which should have cemented us in love, and sodered our hearts together, through our corruption hath been the occasion, and the cause of great breaches and divisions in the church of God.

Thus if you seriously consider your own frequent wants, and often reflect upon your often need of this ordinance, you will see sufficient reason for your often participation of so frequently needful an ordinance.

## CHAP. VII.

*Third conclusion, proving we are to give great diligence to prepare ourselves for the receiving of the Lord's Supper.*

**T**HAT whensoever you are to partake of the Lord's supper, you are to be painful and serious in making preparation for it.

The preparation must be for these reasons, which you may lay to your heart, and find them to be quickning motives to stir you up thereto.

*First,* From the preparation they were wont to make for the passover under the law, 2 Chron. xxx. 3. "They could not keep it at that time, because the priests had not sanctified themselves sufficiently." They did for a while defer it, till they had made more preparation for it: And after their diligence to prepare, they prayed for the pardon of their imperfect preparation, 2 Chron. xxx. 18, 19. "The good Lord pardon every one that prepareth his heart to seek God, the Lord God of his fathers, though he be not cleansed according to the purification of the sanctuary." If any man were unclean, he was to stay another month, and then eat it, Numb. ix. 10, 11.

That they prepared for the passover, appears by,



1. The actions they did before the passover.
  2. Their discourse they had with their children before the passover.
  3. The time they took up before the passover.
- First, From the actions before.*

1. Before they did eat the passover, they were to cleanse their household-stuff, their vessels and utensils from all unleavened bread, that none might be found in them, nor cleave unto them.

The parallel is, Before we eat the Lord's supper, we must cleanse our hearts and lives from all known sin, that we allow ourselves in no known wickedness, that we do not drive a trade of sin, nor be drudges to the devil, nor factors for hell; we may come with many sins bewailed, striven against, and groaning under them, but not with one sin allowed and approved of.

2. Then they made a stricter search after any bit of leavened bread, by lighting a candle, and looking into every little corner and chink in the house, the night before the passover.

The parallel of this is, A closer searching of our hearts, by lighting the candle of conscience at the fire of God's word, and looking into every room and corner of our hearts, least there should be any sin lurking in our souls, and remaining undiscovered: we should enquire after the sins in our understanding, will, affections, what is amiss in our love, delight, joy, &c.

3. Then having found the reliques, and fragments of leavened bread, they cast it out: That they would not only not use it, but not have it in their sight, that they may not set their eyes upon it,

nor look towards it, or would burn it till it were consumed.

The parallel of this, is, The casting away of our sin, when by diligent search we have found it out: we must not find our sin to indulge it, but to forsake and kill it: Not to have our hearts to hanker after our sin, when we come to the Lord's table.

4. They had a form of words for the cursing of that leavened bread, which they could not find out. viz. "All the leaven that is in my power, whether seen by me, or not seen; cleansed by me, or not cleansed; let it be nothing, let it be esteemed as nothing; as the dust of the earth let it be scattered and destroyed."

The parallel of this, is, The disowning of every sin seen, or not seen; after this manner, "Lord, if there be any sin in me, which after all the searching of my heart I have not found out, let it be accursed, let it be as nothing, as the dust of the earth; if there be any sin in me which is not dealt severely with, it is not because I love it, but because I could not find it out.

*Secondly*, From the discourse they had before they came, appears they did prepare for it. This was betwixt the father and his children.

1. The children enquired what is the meaning of this service? Then the parents answered, "It is the Lord's passover, who passed over the houses of the children of Israel in Egypt, when he smote the Egyptians, and delivered our houses, *Exod. xii. 26, 27.*

The parallel of this, is, That Christians should discourse together, or speak unto themselves in

holy soliloquy, viz. What is the meaning, O my soul! of this service, of this love of Christ, in appointing this holy ordinance? What doth it bring to thy remembrance, O my soul! And here you have occasion of expiating in the whole method of God, in exalting the freeness of his grace in man's redemption. "Oh! what meant my dearest Lord in shedding of his blood, and ordaining this for the commemoration of it? Surely it was, Oh my soul, to deliver thee from misery, to make thee partaker of his grace and love, and to seal it to thee, and make thee to rejoice in the remembrance of it.

2. The children ask, "Why do we eat it with bitter herbs?" The parents answered, "Because the Egyptians made the life of our fathers bitter in Egypt, that they might be stirred up to greater thankfulness unto God."

The parallel of this, is, That we should reflect upon our sins, which made our lives bitter, while we lived in them, and that now we should taste more bitterness in our sins, than we ever found sweetness, pleasure and delight therein.

3. "Why do we eat with unleavened bread?" The parents were to answer, "Because the dough of our fathers had no time to be leavened."

The parallel of this, is, That we must make haste to Christ, and eat his New Testament passover, with the unleavened bread of sincerity and truth; that we must not delay to come out of spiritual Egypt, nor go to Christ in hypocrisy, but in truth.

*Thirdly,* From the time there was betwixt the

taking, and the killing of the paschal-lamb, the lamb was taken the tenth day, and killed the fourteenth day of the month, Exod. xii. 3, 7. And it is received as a tradition among the Jews, that for the duration of those four days, the lamb was tied to their bed-posts, that in the evening when they went to bed, and in the morning when they arose, and in the day-time when they were private in their chambers, the sight of the lamb might affect their hearts, and put them in mind of the work they were to do, and bethink themselves of the greatness of God's mercy towards them, in delivering them from Egyptian bondage.

The parallel of this, is, That believers before the Lord's supper, should take a competent measure of time, to bethink themselves of the love of God in delivering them from sin and hell, infinitely worse than Egyptian bondage, and prepare themselves to commemorate the death of Christ, and be partakers of the great blessings that at the Lord's table true believers have conferred upon them.

It is not sufficient to spend an hour of the night before, or in the morning you are to approach unto it; but some days before to have it in your thoughts, that you may consider the greatness of the work you are to go about.

This example of the Jews is cogent unto us, forasmuch as the Lord's supper is not inferior to the passover.

1. Neither in the institution of it; the passover was by God's ordination, and so is the Lord's supper; but God appointed that by Moses, but this was by Christ himself in his own person.

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2. Nor in the signification of it: that to put them in remembrance of their deliverance from Egypt, and typically from hell. This puts us in remembrance of the love of Christ in bringing us from misery, and freeing us from torments infinitely worse than Egyptian slavery.

3. Nor in the use and end of it, this being a seal of the covenant of grace, to convey to believers an assurance of the blessings of the covenant of promise.

4. Nor in the manner of its signification: that a sign of Christ that was to come and suffer this, that Christ is come, and hath already suffered.

This is my first argument why, and motive that we should approach unto the Lord's supper, after painful and serious preparation: No preparation, no participation. It is not then putting on our finer cloaths on a sacrament-day, but the trimming of our hearts, that God expecteth at our hands.

The second argument for preparation for the sacrament, is taken from the author of it, which is God: The more he that doth invite you to this table is your superior, the more you prepare yourselves to sit down thereat, more than if he be your inferior, or your equal: God is infinitely your superior: Consider what this God is that prepares this banquet for you, and prepare for it.

1. He is a great and mighty God, a God of inconceivable majesty, and transcendant glory, whose perfections is infinitely above the most raised apprehensions of angels and men: And would you go unto the table of a great king with filthy hands, and in your rags? And would you

go to the table of the great King of heaven and earth with a filthy heart, and in your sins?

2. He is a pure and a holy God: Indeed every thing here is holy, the signs are holy signs, the things signified are holy things, the ends of the institution are holy ends, and the author of it is the holy God: and shall our hearts only be unholy: The very externals and utensils about it, are and should be clean; the cups are clean, the cloth is clean, else you would be offended, and should not your hearts be clean? If not, will not your God be offended.

3. The author of this ordinance is a God of infinite jealousy, and he is most jealous in the matters of his worship. In the second commandment, which sets forth the manner of God's worship, he makes himself known by this attribute, that he is a jealous God, and if his jealousy should be kindled against you at his table, it will be uncomfortable, it will be terrible to you.

4. The author of this ordinance is an omniscient God, and cannot be deceived; if there be but one among a thousand that receive unworthily, his eye will be upon him, he knows his name, and sees where he sits. God knows the frame of your heart, he knows your end why you are there, and what your diligence was before you came; then come prepared.

The third argument for diligent preparation, is taken from the matter of this sacrament: The more excellent and noble any thing is, the more heinous is the abuse thereof. If a servant break and spoil some earthen pitchers, his master may

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more easily pass it by; but if he take his jewels, and his precious pearls, and cast them in the kennel, and bury them in the dunghill, he would be more difficultly pacified. If a man shall deal unjustly with another, it will be displeasing unto God; but if he shall deal unworthily with his Son, he will be provoked: If you should abuse your common bread and drink, which God daily gives you for your ordinary repast and nourishment, you commit a soul damning sin; but if you profane these spiritual dainties, without repentance, your damnation will be aggravated.

Here you have to do with blood, and then if ever you should be serious; but most of all when it is the blood of God. Consider before you go that you are to have to do with the blood of Christ, and let that quicken you to preparation.

The fourth argument for diligent preparation, is, from the subject, that is to be partaker of it; as we may be considered in a twofold state or capacity, viz. 1. What we were. 2. What we are.

*First,* Every man is born unfit for the Lord's table: We were enemies to God, and therefore except we will come in our enmity to God, we must prepare and fit ourselves, by being reconciled unto God: We are born spiritually dead, and it would not be such a loathsome sight to us to have a dead corps full of plague-sores set down at our table, as a man dead in sin to sit down at God's table, is loathsome unto God: Where there is no life, there is no appetite; and where there is no appetite, there is no actual preparation for this duty.

*Secondly*, Such as are truly converted, may yet be indisposed for this duty; therefore there must be preparation. It is not every one that hath true grace, is presently to be judged actually fit for this ordinance: As a man that is asleep, is a living real man, but yet he is not fit to eat, and drink, and converse with men; so a man may have faith and love, and hope, and yet not be fit for this duty, if his faith be asleep, and love and hope be asleep. For a man that is a worthy receiver, might receive unworthily; my meaning is, That one that is habitually prepared, by having the truth of grace, may receive amiss, by being not actually prepared by the drawing forth of his graces into act and exercise; and how much time must be spent in fervent prayer, and holy meditation, and other duties before you can feel the actings of faith and love, desire and delight in God, before you can bring your heart to be broken for your sin, &c.

Fifth argument for preparation is taken from the consequence, which will be answerable to our preparation, or neglect thereof, which will be either bad or good: For though God doth not bestow the great things in the sacrament for our preparation, yet he will not give them without our preparation.

*First*, The consequents of coming unprepared, will be very dreadful.

1. Such do fearfully increase their guilt in a very high degree, in making themselves guilty of the body and blood of Christ, though not as an actor in his death, yet virtually as an abettor and

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consenter; for an unworthy receiver is a Christ-  
murderer; as he that defaceth the king's picture,  
both reflect upon his person. He that dares rush  
upon the sacrament with reigning sin in his heart,  
would be a Judas unto Christ if he were personally  
upon earth, and had Judas his opportunity, temp-  
tations and other circumstances; he would wash  
his hands in the blood of Christ that comes, but  
not to have his heart washed in the sacrament,  
1 Cor. xi. 27. And will you so come, to have  
your sin increased, instead of having it pardoned?

Oh! what a crying sin is blood-guiltiness, tho'  
be but the blood of a common man! But what  
will it be to be guilty of the blood of the Son of  
God? Did not the blood of Abel cry against Cain  
for vengeance? Oh! what a voice and cry will  
there be then in the blood of Christ? And will  
you have the blood of Christ cry against you, in-  
stead of pleading for you? Nay, you will sin more  
than many of the Jews, that did actually crucify  
him, for many of them did it ignorantly, "For  
had they known him they would not have cruci-  
fied the Lord of glory," 1 Cor. ii. 8. But you  
now and acknowledge him to be such, and yet  
will be guilty of his blood: they did it in the state  
of humiliation, but you do it in his state of exalta-  
tion. It would have been better for Judas, if he  
had not been born; and it would be better for  
you, if you never received.

2. Such draw down great judgments upon  
themselves, and no wonder if great guilt; and  
great sin be followed with great judgments; for  
God will proportion men's sufferings to their sin-

nings. He that cometh without the wedding garment on his soul, shall go away with a curse upon his head and heart. Consider,

2. Such deserve eternal torments, and the damnation of hell, 1 Cor. xi. 29. "He that eateth and drinketh unworthily, eateth and drinketh damnation to himself!" Not to another that partaketh with him, eateth damnation! O what a dreadful morsel is damnation! Whence you see the reason why the devil puts on many drunkards to be so eager after this sacrament, it is, that they may drink their own damnation, there is death to him in this cup. The word *crima*, as well as *catarima*, is rendered damnation in other places, Job iii. 17. 2 Thess. i. 10. Yea, this might be the case of a child of God, that he may deserve damnation though not to be (through repentance) actually condemned. Damnation is the desert of this sin, though not the portion of the sinner, that is brought to repentance for his sin. God may send an hypocrite from his table unto torment. The same Red-emption that was salvation to the Israelites, was death and destruction of the Egyptians. Eateth damnation! Oh what a dreadful word is this damnation! And that when a man comes to be partaker of a Sacrament. Take heed what you do, when you receive, damnation is not a business to be jested with, nor the sacrament a work to be trifled with. Adam did eat his own death, and so may you your own damnation.

3. Such provoke God to inflict upon them oftentimes heavy and dreadful punishment in this life: So that the Lord God will not send a believer

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hell for this sin, yet he might send him to his grave for this sin, 1 Cor. xi. 30. "For this cause many are sickly among you, and many weak, and many are fallen asleep." It is thought that God sent a plague among the Corinthians for profaning the Lord's supper. It is not usual with people in their sickness to reflect upon their unworthy receiving, as the cause thereof: They say, such a time I did over-heat myself, and caught cold, and so my sickness came: But not I went to the Lord's table in my sin, or without actual preparation, and so my sickness came. If unworthy receivers had no love unto their souls, yet for the love they bear unto their bodies, they should be persuaded to forbear till they be prepared. If damnation and hell being out of sight, will not affect them, yet death and the grave, that is a nearer object, methinks should. O how careful should we be to prepare for that, which else might be death to our bodies, and damnation to our souls?

4. Such provoke God to take away this ordinance from them. God's own people by abusing of this privilege, might forfeit the opportunity of approaching unto it: As a father, when he sees the children abuse their food, may call his servants to take away and set it up, till they shall prize it more, and use it better.

2dly, The good consequences are very great, if you rightly receive it, with due preparation and care; and is not that your end in coming to it, that you may be better for it? He that aimeth not at his spiritual advantage in subordination to, and conjunction with the glory of God, comes he knows not why: And to come for this, without

preparation, is to separate betwixt the end and the means. Consider,

1. Such as come in a right manner, shall receive more from God when they come: The time of preparation is your sowing time, when you should sow in tears, and time of receiving, is your reaping time: And he that prepares negligently, shall reap sparingly; he that prepares diligently, shall reap abundantly. For,

1. Such shall receive more grace from God when they shall come away with more love to God, with more desires after God, with more faith in Christ, and hatred to their sins.

2. Such shall receive more comfort, and peace and joy in the Holy Ghost. If you sorrow and weep before you go, you shall come away with your heart full of joy, and your mouth full of praises. When you have been formal and lukewarm in your preparation, your heart hath been dull and dead in, and after your receiving: But when lively and diligent, God hath spoken peace unto your conscience, and assured you of the pardon of your sins, and sent you from his table to your own with a joyful heart, and with a cheerful countenance.

3. Such shall be more acceptable and welcome unto God. What you have done aright, he will graciously accept, and wherein you failed, he will freely pardon; then the Father will bid you welcome, and the Son will bid you welcome, and the Holy Ghost will bid you welcome, when you have been weeping and mourning in secret for your sin, whereby you have crucified the Lord to life; when you have been begging at the throne



grace, Lord give me a spiritual appetite after  
is heavenly food: Lord give me power against  
pride, and passion, and earthly mindedness.  
After you have been searching into every corner  
your heart, that you may find every Achan in  
your soul; God will say, yonder is a soul that  
hath taken pains with himself in secret, and hath  
sought unto me for a gracious acceptance of his  
person and performances, and now he shall find  
that he is welcome: For I will send forth my  
spirit and comfort him, I will give him my grace  
and quicken him, I will give him my Son, and  
justify him. O! it will be sweet to have God to  
smile upon you at his table: But to have him  
frown upon you when you are there, will be uncomfortable:  
And to have him withdraw, will make your duty  
be unprofitable. Could you take delight at a  
man's table, if he frown upon you, for every mor-  
sel that you eat? And will it not be worse when  
you take the bread, then to have God to frown?  
And when you take the cup, then to have God  
to frown, and say, Friend, how came you in hither  
amongst my children, when you have not on the  
wedding garment? Or if you have grace, yet have  
not endeavoured by painful preparation, to have  
drawn forth into act and exercise?  
Sixth argument, God makes great preparation  
for us in this ordinance: Therefore we should  
make great preparations when we come to partake  
of it, and shall not we be preparing to receive  
that God is preparing to give? Doth the great  
God make preparations to entertain poor sinners  
at his table, and shall we come rashly and care-

lessly to it: Matth. xxii. 4. "Tell them that are bidden, Behold, I have prepared my dinner, my oxen, and my fattlings are killed, and all things are ready. Oh, what delightful words these! Oh, that they were delightful to my soul! Oh, how refreshing are these things prepared! And how sweet is the invitation of God to us, to come and be partakers of them! Justice—~~my~~ God hath prepared torments for us, but behold, mercy hath prepared precious privileges for us! O what great things were to be done, that this Father might be prepared for us! the Son of God must come down from heaven to earth and become the son of man; He must suffer and bleed, and die, and have his garments dyed in blood, that this ordinance might be prepared for believers! Besides, here are great things prepared to be given to such as do prepare to come rightly to it: Here is pardon for sin prepared for you: here is peace and comfort prepared for you: here is further increase of grace prepared for you: but where are your preparations to receive them? Here is mercy ready to justify you: here is blood ready to wash and sanctify you; here is righteousness ready to be imputed to you; but is your faith ready to receive them? Is your love ready to be acted towards this God that hath made them ready for you? Is your heart ready to give thanks and praises to the God that will bestow these things upon you? Will you give occasion to your God to complain of you, and say, I am ready to give increase of grace to yonder believer, but he is not ready to receive it? He hath not enlarged the capacity

(soul, but after comfort, but y But if y ings are own up od of C d consci d gospel e upon le you, is dressed Seventh tainmen erefore v mes you od into y hen you ur hous in? You ought fo d him. eat God open th e King om in y ng with rit; and aces in y ve receive ve conv Eight a

soul, by getting greater hungering and thirst-  
after it: I am ready to give him peace and  
comfort, when his soul wants both peace and com-  
fort, but yet he is not ready to partake thereof.  
But if you come in your sins, great and terrible  
things are prepared for you; a heavy charge is  
laid up against you, that you do abuse the  
blood of Christ, that you crucify the Lord afresh,  
and your conscience is ready to accuse you, the law  
and gospel ready to condemn you, Satan ready to  
charge upon you, death and judgment ready to in-  
fernalize you, and hell ready to torment you, and  
all this is dreadful.

Seventh argument, God looketh for great en-  
tainment in our hearts and at our hands; and  
therefore we should prepare for him: God wel-  
comes you into his table, and you must welcome  
him into your heart, and both require preparation.  
When you expect some nobleman to come into  
your house, what preparation do you make for  
him? Your house is cleansed, your best furniture  
brought forth, and all your servants ready to at-  
tend him. When you come unto a sacrament the  
great God is to come into your heart, therefore  
open the everlasting gates of your soul, that  
the King of glory may enter in; and let every  
room in your heart be washed and cleansed, and  
hung with the tapestry and embroidery of the  
spirit; and let all the faculties of your soul, and  
powers in your heart be ready to attend him. Let  
your eyes receive him, let faith eye him, and your soul  
converse and communion with him.

Eight argument, The many duties that here

in order to be performed, and the many graces that are here to be exercised, call for diligent preparation. If you were to perform any of these duties singly, which you are here to do jointly it is your duty to prepare for each of them. Here sometime you are to pray to him; here sometime you are to be employed in praising of him; here sometime you are to hear from him: and here sometime you are to meditate upon him, and upon the great work of man's redemption, and will you not prepare for all these duties, which are hard and difficult rightly to be done? Here your heart is to be broken, and to be bound up: here your soul is to have a mixture of affection, of joy and sorrow: Sorrow, that you sinned, and that your sins did bring all this sorrow and suffering upon your Lord, joy that your Lord would die and suffer for your sins; here you are to love him and to hate your sins: Here you are to receive him, and apply him, and all his privileges to your soul, and do not such great things as these, require your greatest preparation?

## CHAP. VIII.

*Containing several Questions to excite us to greater diligence in preparation.*

**BUT** because our hearts are too apt to do the greatest work with slightness, and where there should be the greater care and diligence I shall further add a few considerations to your mind, wherewith you would do well to urge your



part, whenever you are to go unto this ordinance, in the fear of God, I beseech you, answer these following demands.

*Quest.* 1. What if you were to die this day, what preparations would you have made then? the same you are to make, when you are to receive the Lord's supper.

Two things especially concern a man to get before he dies, and look what degree of necessity there is both, for a man's death, the same proportion of necessity there is of both for the Lord's supper.

2. It doth concern a man before he die, to get a fullness of grace, that he hath real love to God, fellowship in Christ, peace with God through Christ; and without this a man cannot die happily: This is necessary for a man that is to come to the Lord's supper, that he love God, that he do indeed believe and hate his sin, or else he cannot receive worthily. Wo to that man that goes down to his grave, before he be converted; and wo be to that man that comes to the sacrament, before he be born again.

3. It concerns a man before he die, to get some evidences of his grace, and this is necessary to his more comfortable dying; a man may have grace, and so be delivered from the hurt of death! but if he have not some evidences of this grace, he will lie under the fears of death. So a man before he comes to the Lord's table, should endeavour to get the knowledge, sight, and evidence of his interest in Christ, and that is necessary to his more comfortable receiving; without which, though he may

receive worthily, yet not without some fears, I fear Christ did not die for me, I fear this blood was not shed for me, I fear I do not love God and so will be deprived of those joys and comforts which would come in by a particular application of Christ to himself. If he can conclude, Here is blood, and it was shed for me, here is righteousness, and it is imputed unto me. I think a man that is not fit to die is not fit to receive. A man should sit down to the Lord's table with as great care, as he would lie down in his grave, and be as serious for his soul at this ordinance, as he would upon his dying bed: You should go to the Lord's table as carefully, as if you were going into another world.

But do you so? Tell me so, If you had been to die this day you come to receive, would you not have prayed more than you have done? Would you not have shed more tears for your sins? Would not more of your groans and sighs have pierced the heavens, and reached the ears of God? Would you not have searched your hearts more narrowly? And passed sentence upon yourself more impartially? And been humbled more deeply? Would you not have said, If I be mistaken about the truth of grace, now I am to die, I am lost for ever? And will you not say, If I be mistaken about the truth of grace now I am to sit down at the Lord's table, without my serious repentance, I am undone for ever? And instead of having the pardon of my sin sealed unto my soul, by my unworthy going, I bind the guilt of all my former sins upon my soul, as if the other were not burden enough

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I have added this to all the rest, in making myself guilty of the blood of Christ.

But that you may receive with the same seriousness as if you were to die, ask yourself these three questions.

1. What sin would most disturb the peace of my conscience, if I were to die to day? And mourn most for that sin at the Lord's table. What is the sin that would make you most afraid to die, and be a trouble to your departing soul? Would it be the pride or passion of your inordinate loving of the world? Would it be your neglect of secret duty, or your careless performance of it, that you prayed not more fervently? Would it be, that you forgot the Lord so long, and neglected your precious soul so long? That you have done no more for God, that you have lived no more unto him? That so much of your precious time is gone, and so little of your necessary work is done? Let that cause trouble your heart, and fetch tears from your eyes, when you are at the Lord's table.

2. What mercy is it you would beg from God, if now you were to die? Oh! beg that mercy when you are receiving. If you were dying, would you ask for riches, or for honours, or the greatest things of this world? Alas! these would not fit you for your death. Or would it not be the truth of grace, the favour of God, assurance of his love, an interest in Christ, in his promises, in his privileges, and an evidence of your title to this kingdom? Would you not then wish, Oh! that God would pardon me, and tell me, He hath pardoned me? Oh! that he would now be mine, and own

me for his own, would not these be your desires, if you were to die?

Desire the same, when you are to receive the supper of the Lord: will you go thither with desires after riches, and temporal enjoyments? Or with desires that others would think well of you, and esteem you as a Christian, though you care not to be so? Those things will not fit you for receiving, no more than for dying: If you were to die, would you desire to be thought godly, rather than to be so indeed? What if one should think you die with grace in your heart, and you do not? And what if others should think you receive with grace in your heart, and you do not? Neither of these would do you real good, beg then the same things when you receive, as you would if you were to die.

3. What mercy is there you would especially bless God for, if you were to die? Give thanks to God for that mercy, when you do receive. If you were to die, would you chiefly bless God for making of you rich and great in the world? Or for making of you truly good and holy towards God? Would you not upon a dying bed bless God for Christ, for the pardon of your sins, and for the hopes you have of an eternal blessed life? Give thanks to God for these, with as great reality at the Lord's table, as if you were going to the bar of God from a dying bed.

*Quest. 2.* What if Christ were personally present, and were to administer the Sacrament to you with his own hands, what preparation would you make then? If Christ your Lord and Master were now upon earth, and were to sit with you at the

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defires, what care would you have used, to have got your heart into a holy frame? If Christ had been with you in your closet, when you were upon your knees, would you not have prayed more earnestly, and wept more abundantly than you did? If Christ had been with you the night before, and seen you look more into your shop-book, than into the book of God, and the book of your heart, and seen you turn over the leaves of your books of accompt, and not the volume of your life; and been with you, when you were more busy in cleansing your house than of your heart, would you not have blushed, to look him in the face at his table. Why, Christ as God, was really with you, when you were preparing of your heart, and took special notice of your diligence, or remissness in that work, he is with you in the morning before you go, he observes what time you rise, what time you spend, what pains you take to order this duty; and though they be poor mortal sinful men, that do administer this ordinance to you in Christ's name and stead, yet he requires you should be as serious, as if he himself were visibly present; for as he is God, he is really present; and will you not reverence and dread Christ as God, as much as you would Christ as man?

The master of the feast doth surely come and view his guests, and if there were one hypocrite amongst a thousand believers, he would know him by his name, and fix his eyes upon him, and say, 'Friend, what make you here amongst my people, when you have not that love to me as they have, nor taken that pains to prepare yourself as

they have done?" Matth. xxii. 11, 12, 13. He did say, 'This is the Judas that will betray me;' and he will say, 'This is the man that profanes my table; this is the woman that abused my blood;' think of this, when you are to come unto this duty, and this dignity, to be a guest at this table of the Lord.

*Quest. 3.* What if you should see God strike every unworthy receiver down dead in the place with the bread in his mouth, or with the cup in his hand, what preparations would you make then? Or if God should inflict some painful or tormenting disease upon every one that comes amiss, how careful would you be then? If God should say to Death as Absalom did to his servants concerning Amnon, 2 Sam. xiii. 28. "Absalom commanded his servants, saying, Mark ye now when Amnon's heart is merry with wine, and when I say unto you, smite Amnon, then kill him, fear not: have not I commanded you?" What if God should say to death, when such a man is receiving the sacramental wine, 'And I say unto thee, smite him, then kill him, fear not; I have commanded thee.' If God should deal with you as he did with the Israelites, in Psal. lxxviii. 30, 31. "While the meat was in their mouths, the wrath of God came upon them, and slew the fatest of them." It would surely be a dreadful sight to see an unworthy receiver go down to his grave, and to hell, with the sacrament in his mouth: or what if God should do as is expressed in another case, Job xx. 23. "When he is about to fill his belly, God shall cast the fury of his wrath upon him, and

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shall rain it upon him while he is eating?" How would you come then? Or what if you should fall down at the ministers feet, as Ananias, and Saphirah, at the apostles feet? If you would dare to come unworthily, what care would you take then?

You do not know but God may do so, and to venture upon a trial here is dangerous. Unworthy receiving hath been the death, as well as the damnation of many that so come. Therefore beware.

*Quest. 4.* What if men could look into your heart, and observe the frame and temper of your soul, what preparations would you make then? If it should be known to the minister, and to all the receivers, what time you spent in secret, in praying and self-examination, would you not spend more time than now you do? Else many would have a less esteem of your piety than now they have. If any holy man (unknown to you) had stood at your closet-door, and over-heard you pray so luke-warmly as you did, would you not have blushed, that he should have seen you at the sacrament? And all this is known to God, and should not the eye and knowledge of God affect you more, than if all the men in the world could know and see your heart? He sees your principle and end more exactly, than men could do, if your breast were all transparent glass.

*Quest. 5.* What if this were the last opportunity you should ever have to be at the Lord's table, what preparation would you make then? If you were to do that which is of so great con-

cernment, which you must never do more? If God from heaven should call to you the night before, and say, 'Now look well to the frame of your heart, that you go with care, and eat in faith, and come away with profit, for you shall never receive more!' Would you then be so slight as now you are! Why? How do you know you shall? Are you not mortal? And have you not seen some at one time at a sacrament, and that were dead in their graves, and their souls in heaven, or in hell before the next? Hath God given you a lease of your life? Or hath he told you, when you have an opportunity, that he will give you another? Come then, every time, as you would do, if you were sure it were your last, as you are not sure but it may be indeed your last.

*Quest. 6.* What if you were to go from the sacramental board to God's bar, from his table to his tribunal, what preparation would you make then? If God should from heaven tell you, the same day you do receive, the same day I will judge you, the same day I will require an account of you, how you came, and why you came, and whether you did eat in faith, and drink in faith, and do all as one that did believe a judgment, and a life to come? Why this may be your case, and thus God may deal with you, and how if he should, after you have come unprepared?

*Quest. 7.* What if you had been then present under the cross of Christ, when he was crucified, and seen his wounds, and heard his dying groans, and were then to come to commemorate this death of Christ, what preparations would you have made

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men? What if you had seen the Lord sweating drops of blood in a cold season? And seen the thorns upon his head, the spear thrust into his side, that you may have a window to look into his heart, to see how he hath loved you, and seen the nails in his hands and feet! and were after such a sight as this, to come unto this table, with what affection would you then come? Why, all this is really represented to you in this ordinance, and should be certainly believed, as if you had with your eyes beheld it done. What affection would some discover in beholding the execution of a common malefactor? And shall not we before hand endeavour to raise our affections, when we are come to see the crucifixion of our dearest Lord?

*Quest. 8.* What if one that hath been damned for unworthy receiving, should come unto thee from the place of torment, and tell thee, he hath found it a provoking sin, and that which makes damnation more intolerable, to eat unworthily at the table of the Lord, what preparations wouldst thou make then? It is no breach of charity to conceive, or to conclude, that some that have been at the Lord's table, are now in hell, and shall be there forever: For if drunkards, swearers, or hypocrites shall come unto this ordinance, that shall not save them dying such. Christ himself that at the terrible day of his coming shall judge these men for abusing of his blood, hath told us before hand, that many such shall be cast into everlasting torments, Luke xiii. 25. "When once the master of the house is risen up, and hath shut to the

door, and ye begin to stand without, and to knock at the door, saying, "Lord, Lord, open unto us" and he shall answer and say unto you I know you not whence you are." Verse 26. "Then shall ye begin to say, We have eaten and drunk in thy presence, and thou hast taught in our streets." As if they should say, Lord, we think it strange to find the gates of heaven shut against us: We think it strange, that we that have not been thy hearers, and have been at thy table, that thou shouldst not know whence we are, that thou shouldst not approve us, nor receive us: But Christ again replies, Verse 27. "But he shall say, I tell you, I know not whence you are, depart from me all ye workers of iniquity." As if he should say, I told you once before, that I did not know you, love you, nor approve of you; and though you plead your outward church-privileges of hearing and receiving, I tell you once again, I know you not; go, get you gone; go get you down into eternal torments; depart, depart, you were professors of piety: but you were lovers and workers of iniquity. Now, suppose one that thou hast known, and seen at this table with thee, that hath died in his sins, and been damned for them, and hath been in hell a year or two suffering the vengeance, and the wrath of God for this, as for his other sins, should he come to thee, and tell thee, I have known since I departed out of this life, in which thou now dost live, what is the punishment that is due unto unworthy receivers, for I have felt it; believe me, though a damned soul, for I have felt it; I suffer much for

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blood as an unholy thing, in which I was often intreated to have had my heart washed: It is dreadful, dreadful, dreadful, thou dost not know that art yet upon the earth, what a dreadful thing it is to lie in hell, and bear the punishment that is inflicted upon unworthy receivers. After such an admonition as this from a damned soul, what preparations wouldst thou make? Why the ministers of God do tell thee so, and why wilt thou not credit our doctrine, as much as the words of a damned soul? Nay, God himself doth tell thee plainly in his word, the greatness of this sin, and the punishment thereof, and wilt thou not believe the true eternal God, before a damned reprobate? Or shall not the words of that God that shall judge thee, affect thine heart, and make as deep an impression upon thy soul, as would the words of one that should come to thee from among the damned?

*Quest. 9.* What if Christ should call from heaven, as he did to Saul in another case, "Saul, Saul, why persecutest thou me?" So what if he should call to thee while thou art eating, or while thou art drinking at his table, sinner, sinner, why persecutest thou my blood, and should mark thee out, and make thee known, what preparations wouldst thou make then? when Christ was upon the earth eating with the twelve, he said, "Verily I say unto you, that one of you shall betray me." Oh, what an amazing word was this! how did it fill their hearts with fear and sorrow, yet not knowing who was the man that should do this! How did they look one upon another, and said

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s often he by one, "Lord, Is it I?" and another, "Lord, Is it I?" And were very inquisitive to know, who was the man that should do this so heinous a fact: Whom the Lord discovereth by a sign, "He that dippeth with me in the dish, the same shall betray me," that is the man, that is the traitor.

So, if while the congregation is met to commemorate his death, Christ should cry from heaven, saying, There is one amongst you that is profaning my blood, that is unworthily eating of my body, that is come hither in his sins? How swiftly would they look one upon another, with paleness in their faces, and fear in their hearts, not knowing who should be the person that is doing this? One saying within himself, Lord, I hope it is not I? And another, Lord, I hope it is not I? No, saith Christ, it is yonder man that hath now the bread in his mouth, or yonder man that sits in yonder seat, and is now taking the cup in his hand, and drinking of it; this is the man, if he have him out from amongst you. If this should be the course that Christ should take, what preparation wouldst thou make then? How narrowly wouldst thou search thy heart? How fervently wouldst thou pray before thou comest, that thou mightest not be the person that Christ should thus cry out against from heaven, nor thus shame thee before the public congregation? Why, though Christ doth not this for the present, yet he will discover the sinner, and publish the sin, at a more dreadful day, and before a greater congregation: when all the world shall be gathered together, and

before them all he shall lay this unto thy charge before angels, men and devils, This is the man that did carelessly come unto my table, and did profane my holy institution, therefore take him devils, and drag him down with you into eternal torments, and cast him into the lake of fire, where he shall suffer the vengeance of eternal burnings for his bold adventure in coming unprepared, and in his sins unto my table; devils take him with you, for he shall never come into my kingdom.

These questions I would desire you with greatest seriousness to propound unto yourself, when you are to approach to this solemn duty, and find your heart so slight in, and backward to proportionable preparation to the weightiness of the work.

## CHAP. IX.

*Containing some directions to get our hearts rightly disposed for the receiving of the Lord's supper.*

**H**AVING thus far proceeded in proving it your important duty, to prepare your hearts for this ordinance, and laying down some serious questions for quickening you thereto: I next come to give you some directions what you must do, that your receiving may be acceptable unto God, and profitable unto you: And they are these four.

*First*, Search your own hearts, enquiring narrowly into the state of your soul, how it is between God and you.

*Secondly*, Solemnly consider such things as have a tendency in them to dispose your hearts thereto,

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*Thirdly*, Fervently pray to God before you go, that you may receive worthily when you are there.

*Fourthly*, Seriously discourse with some (if you have opportunity) about such things that may conduce to raise your affections, and quicken your graces before you go.

*First*, Strictly search thine own heart, 1 Cor. x. 28. "But let a man examine himself, and so let him eat of that bread, and drink of that cup:" The word signifieth a diligent and narrow search into the nature and property of the thing, that is the object thereof: As the goldsmith proves the goodness of his metal. Now, Christian reader, for thine help herein, I would advise thee to put such questions as these unto thyself, and after due deliberation with thyself, and prayer unto God, that he would discover the state of thy soul unto thee, give in a true and serious answer, as one that knows thou must again be called to an account, and be examined by God himself at the last day.

*Quest. 1.* Have I a principle of spiritual life, or am I yet dead in trespasses and sins? Oh my soul! the work thou art intending as a sacrament, is a lively work; and if thou art dead, thou canst not do it; thou art to go feed upon the bread of life, and if thou art dead, thou canst not do it. Thou art not to feast only with, but upon the Lord; but if thou art dead, thou canst not do it. I find it recorded in Num. ix. 10, 11. If any man was defiled by reason of a dead body, he was not to eat of the Lord's passover till the second month. How much more unfit am I to

eat the Lord's supper, if yet my heart be dead, not only dull, but dead! There is no converse between the living and the dead; dead men do not converse with living men; and a dead heart, altogether void of spiritual life, cannot converse with a living God.

In order therefore to the discovering of thy spiritual life, I will propose these following enquiries, to which give in thy answer seriously, as in the fear of God; and solemnly, as in the presence of that God that doth search thy heart, and know thy state, and let thy conscience make reply, as thou wouldst do, if thou wast now to die.

*First*, Hast thou ever had any spiritual sense of things good and evil? Didst thou ever see the excellency and the beauty of Christ, and the villainess and deformity of sin? Is Christ most lovely, and sin most loathsome in thine eyes? Didst thou ever taste such sweetness that there is in Christ, in a promise, or in communion with God, that makes thee chuse Christ, embrace a promise, prefer communion with God above all things in this world? Or didst thou ever taste such bitterness in sin that makes thee loath it, and unfeignedly willing to leave and forsake it: once thou hadst relish in spiritual things, but hast thou now? Time was then thou didst taste sweetness in thy sin, when thou did delight therein, but is it as bitter to thee now, as then it was pleasant and delightful? Thou hast had an ear to hearken to the temptations of the devil, the flatteries of the world; to sinners enticing thee to sin, to the corruption of thine own heart, calling thee to yield to all these: But thou hast not an ear to listen to the motions of the

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spirit of God, nor to the voice of the ministers of God, nor to the voice of the mercies, nor the judgments of God, nor to the voice and cry of thine own conscience; but now thou art deaf unto the former, the devils call, but thou wilt not hear, and sinners call, but thou wilt not hearken; and thine ears are open to the latter, if God call, thou sayest, *Speak, Lord, thy servant heareth*; if the Spirit whispereth to thy heart, thou perceivest his meaning, and obeyest, &c. Thou once did feel ordinances and duties to be a burden to thee, and groaned under them as a load too heavy for thee to bear, and this was when thou didst make light of sin: Christ's easy yoke thou thoughtest to be intolerable, but sin's intolerable yoke thou judgest to be easy, because sin was in thine heart, as (an element) in its proper place: But tell me, dost thou not now groan under the weight of sin? Dost thou not really think, there is no evil of affliction so heavy, as the evil of transgression? Doth it not make thee to cry out, *O wretched man that I am, who shall deliver thee from this body of death?* That now thou couldst, at least, sometimes desire that thou mightest be loosed from thy body of flesh, that thou mayest be freed from this body of sin? If so, then thou art alive.

*Secondly,* Hast thou mortified sin, or hast thou not? Is sin dead, or alive? If thy sin do live and reign, then thou art dead; if thy sin be dead, then thou dost live: the life and reight of sin, and the life and power of grace, cannot consist in the same soul, at the same time; though sin be in thine heart, yet thine heart is not fit for, nor in

thy sins; though sin be in thy affections, yet indeed sin hath lost thine affections; as there is sin in thy love, but thou dost not love thy sin: there is sin in thy joy, but thou dost not rejoice in thy sin: thou dost not find those flaming desires of thine heart after forbidden things, as sometimes thou didst; neither hath sin that universal acknowledged authority in thy soul, as once it had, nor that peaceable possession in thy heart, which once thou wast contented to give and yield unto it: But it is even death to thee, to feel these lusts so much as crawling in thy heart, though they do not rule. If so, then sin is dead, and thou dost live; if not so, then sin doth live, and thou art dead.

*Thirdly*, Canst thou groan and cry unto the Lord, and will nothing still thee but a Christ? Then surely thou dost live, though thou canst not word thy desires at the throne of grace, (as new born babes cannot ask, but yet can cry for the breast) nor in such language as others ask for Christ, and grace: Yet thou canst cry for Christ, and weep for grace, and all the creatures cannot quiet thee, till thou hast hopes that Christ is formed in thee. surely they have spiritual life, that in this sense do thus cry after Christ.

*Fourthly*, Dost thou grow in the graces of the Spirit? It may be, thou darest not say, thou hast more grace, but this thou findest, thou hast more desires after grace, that is, more grace. Art thou indeed thankful for a little grace, but yet art reaching after more? Thou prizest one dram of grace above thousands of gold and silver; yet it is not a little will serve thy turn? Dost thou

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grow more weary of thy sin? Dost thou grow more earnest after Christ, and God, and heaven? Surely growth is a proof of life.

*Fifthly*, Dost thou work for God, and Christ, and heaven, and for thy soul in a spiritual manner: spiritual operations, do discover spiritual life. Many live a natural life, that will not work; but those that be spiritually alive, be at work; though some more, and some less. Dost thou pray, and labour in thy prayers? Dost thou hear, and take pains with thy heart in hearing? Dost thou do thy work according to those spiritual rules, which God hath given thee in his word, or wherein thou failest, thou art grieved for it? Dost thou work from a spiritual principle of love to God, and a holy fear of him: Dost thou pray unto him, because thou lovest him? And dost thou abstain from sin, and watch and pray against it, because thou wouldst neither offend nor grieve him? Hast thou a spiritual end in working while thou livest that thou mayest glorify and honour God? though all thy working in this manner deserve nothing from the Lord; neither dost thou thus labour in all thy duties, to rely upon them, and to take them off from resting upon Christ; yet they are evidences that thou art raised from the death of sin, to a life of grace: And having life, thou must have food and God hath prepared it for thee upon his table, and thou mayest go and feed thereon. This is the first thing that you should enquire after, as to your state, whether you be spiritually alive?

*Quest. 2.* Did I hunger and thirst after Christ?

This also will be an evidence of your spiritual life: for dead men do not hunger, they do not thirst; say then to thyself, lo, O my soul, thou art invited to a feast, to a banquet of gospel dainties, to a feast of fat things, a feast of wines on the lees, of fat things full of marrow, of wines on the lees, well refined, Isa. xxv. 6. "Lo, O my soul, wisdom hath killed her beasts, she hath mingled her wine; she hath also furnished her table: She hath sent forth her maidens, she crieth upon the highest places of the city; whoso is simple, let him turn in hither: And as for him that wanteth understanding, she saith to him, come eat of my bread, and drink of the wine that I have mingled," Prov. ix. 2, 3, 4, 5, 6. Thus the Lord doth call thee, O my soul! to rich and costly provisions, but where is thy hunger? Where is thy appetite? If I could find hunger, I could find an invitation to go; for I read, my Lord hath said, Isa. lv. 1. "Ho, every one that thirsteth, come ye to the waters, and he that hath no money: Come ye, buy and eat; yea, come, buy wine and milk without money, and without price." And John vii. 37. In the last day, that great day of the feast, Jesus stood and cried, saying, "If any man thirst, let him come unto me, and drink." If I could find I hunger, I can find a promise that I shall be satisfied. Matth. v. 6. "Blessed are they which do hunger and thirst after righteousness; for they shall be filled." Come then, tell me, O my soul! dost thou feel an emptiness in thyself, and a want of those things which alone can satisfy spiritual hungerings? Art thou pinched? Art thou pained

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with the sense of the want of Christ? Art thou impatient till he come unto thee? Dost thou think the time is long till he doth fill thee? Canst thou take any pains that thou mightest enjoy him? Must thou have a Christ, or nothing will content thee? Then thou art one whom God doth call? be encouraged, arise, and go to the table of thy Lord. This is another thing that thou must enquire after, because it is not only thy duty to have life, but to have spiritual hungerings after Christ, when thou goest to the table of the Lord.

*Quest. 3.* Do I love God and Christ, or do I not? If I do not love him, what have I to do at his table? If God be an enemy to me, and I yet an enemy to God, wherefore should I go and bring down wrath upon myself? But if I love him, why should I be so dismayed, because I am a sinner, since the Lord is willing freely to bestow all things that are here provided upon them that love him? The more sin I find I have if I do love him, I see the greater need I have to go unto him. Put then the question to thyself, as Christ did unto Peter, John xxi. 15. "So when they had dined, Jesus said unto Simon Peter, Simon, son of Jonas, lovest thou me more than these? He saith unto him, Yea, Lord, thou knowest that I love thee.——"

And this question Christ put to him the second and the third time: So do thou, before thou goest to this supper: ask thy soul, Oh, my soul! Lovest thou the Lord Jesus? Canst thou say, The Lord knoweth that I love him? Yet ask him the second time, Oh, my soul! Lovest thou the Lord Jesus?

Canst thou again with Peter, answer, Yea, Lord, thou knowest that I love thee? But that thou mayest be sure, enquire again the third time, tell me, O my soul! Lovest thou indeed the Lord Jesus? For there are many that are mistaken, and think they love him, but they do not: Canst thou therefore appeal to God, and say, Lord, thou that knowest all things, thou knowest that I love thee? I do not indeed love thee, as thou hast loved me, yet I love thee: I do not love thee as much as others do, nor as much as I myself desire to do, and that is my grief and sorrow, but yet I love thee, and that is my peace and comfort. And I have these evidences of my love, that makes me say, Lord, I love thee, for I hate that which is a grief unto thee, and that because it grieves thee: Lord, I love thee, for I am grieved at thy absence, and am rejoiced at thy presence: Lord, I love thee, for I love any that are like thee, that bear thy image and thy stamp upon their hearts: O my Lord, I love thee, for I love the place and duties where thou wert wont to warm thy peoples hearts: But if thou beest not there, I cannot take up contentedly with them, except I see thee. Lord, I do humbly say, I love thee, for I dare not deny but that I am grieved when thou art dishonoured by myself, or others; though I grieve for this less than I should, because I love thee less than I ought. Lord, I love thee, for I desire to have a heart that should be willing to part with all for thee: Things sinful in themselves at all times, and things lawful when thou callest me to it. Once more

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I humbly say, I love thee, for I would have a heart to love and long, and look for thy coming and appearance in thy glory. Come away then, O my love! (saith Christ unto thee) and commemorate the death of thy Lord, whom thou dost love. O my soul! thy Lord doth call thee, arise, and go unto his table, where thou shalt see how he hath loved thee, and where thou mightest have thy love to him more increased and inflamed. Thus thou shouldest enquire concerning thy love to Christ, when thou art to go unto this feast of love.

*Quest. 4.* Do I believe on Jesus Christ, or do I not? Have I the faith of God's elect, or have I not? If I should not eat in faith, and drink in faith, I should not receive aright; but if I do believe, though my faith be weak, I have a right to him, and to his privileges, which he hath purchased by his death, and will seal unto me in the sacrament. Then turn thy speech to God, and say Lord, If I do prize thy Son above all things in the world, may I then conclude, I do believe? God tells thee that thou mayest, 1 Peter ii. 7. "Unto you therefore that believe, he is precious." If I make it my business to purify my heart, do I then believe? God tells thee, that thou doest, Acts xv. 9. "Purifying their hearts by faith." If I take thy Son for my Lord and Saviour, and receive him upon gospel terms into my heart, might I then conclude that I have faith? God tells thee that thou mayest, John i. 12. "But as many as received him, to them gave he power to become the sons of God, even to them that believe."

on his name. If so then, Lord, I will, in obedience to thy command, do this in remembrance of thee.

*Quest. 5.* Once more enquire of thyself, and say, have I repented of my sins that I have committed against the Lord, and am I truly humbled for the same? For how shall I behold my Saviour broken for my sins, if my heart was never broken for my sins? Though I do come short of that degree of brokenness of heart for sin, as some of God's people have attained unto, yet have I that repentance which will prove repentance unto life. Though my tears are not so many as my sins nor my sorrow as great as my transgressions, yet have I so much sight and sense of sin, as makes me loathe myself, and abhor my sin, and willing to forsake them, and separate me from the love of them, and delight in them? Oh my conscience! canst thou not bear me witness, that it is the breaking of my heart, that I have broken God's commands? That my mourning proceeds from love and sense of God's kindness and his goodness to me? That it is my unfeigned desire to be washed from the filth, as well as delivered from the guilt of sin; to be freed from the power and dominion, as well as from the punishment and damnation that is due unto me for my sin; that though I did not know but hell might be my portion, yet I would not sin against the Lord? Canst thou not bear me witness, that I endeavour (though I come short in my endeavour) to keep myself unspotted from the world, and that I hate the garments spotted with the flesh? That sin in the temptation of it

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is grievous to me, as well as after the commission of it; that I do groan (though not so much as I should) under this body of sin, longing for the time when I shall be delivered from it; crying out in the bitterness of my soul, Lord, when shall it be? Lord, when shall it be, that I shall be perfectly freed from this loathsome body of sin, which (through thy grace) is so offensive to my soul? If so, then I will arise and approach to this ordinance, where I may be assured of my pardon, and be furthered with further strength and power against my sin. Thus thou shouldest enquire, Whether thou hast repented of thy sin, when thou art to go and see what hath been done unto thy Lord by reason of thy sins. Thus far for trial.

*Secondly,* When thou hast thus proceeded to find out the truth of thy grace, then next go on to solemn meditation, to consider of these things which might excite and stir up thy grace, the truth of which thou findest already to be wrought in thy heart, that so thou mightest go into this ordinance with the lively exercise of grace, that all thy graces might be ready to act according to thy duty in this work; for it will be thy sin to go into the table of the Lord with dull affections, and deadness upon thy heart; and it is an aggravation of thy sin, if it be through want of diligent endeavour to get thy soul affected and inflamed with love before thou goest. Now for thy help herein, I shall instance in some of those things, which will be fit and suitable objects for thy thoughts before thou goest, and not unseasonable to meditate upon while thou art there.

*First*, Meditate and dwell in thy thoughts upon the love of God in the great work of man's redemption. Consider that thou wast in a fallen and miserable estate, under the curse of the law, liable to the wrath of God, the torments of hell, under the power of thy lusts, and the bondage of the devil, and couldst not help thyself, nor recover thyself to the happiness from which thou didst fall: Then get thy heart affected with the love of God, who in the eternal project of his counsel, hath contrived a way for thy salvation. And here, if thy heart be not yet effected.

1. Urge it with the freeness of this love. Consider, O my soul! it was free love, that God would send his son to die for fallen man, and not for fallen angels; to take upon him not the nature of angels, but the seed of Abraham. But yet consider, O my soul! the freeness of this love to thee, who hath ordained thee to salvation by the death of Christ, when thousands of others are passed by, and suffered to perish in their sins. God might have passed thee by, and applied it to others, whereas he hath passed many others by, and applied it unto thee: It may be thy nearest relations have no share, nor saving benefit by this redemption, when there was no more in thee to move God to this love, than there was in them; yea, as much in thee to oppose and resist the application of this redemption, as was in the heart of the vilest of the children of men. Surely some believing thoughts of the freeness of God's love to thee in particular, will warm thy heart before thou approachest to the table of the Lord, and

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fill thee with desires to be there, and the more, inflame thine heart when thou art there. If yet thy heart be dull, do but ask it this one question, What wouldst thou have done, O my soul! and where should thou have for ever been, if God had not loved thee, freely loved thee?

2. Urge thine heart till it be affected with this love of God, which is such pure love; no advantage redoundeth unto God by his loving of thee; if thou hadst been damned, God had not been prejudiced thereby; nay, he could have glorified himself in thy damnation: And if thou shalt be saved, there is no addition made thereby to God's happiness, for that was perfect before the world began. Oh, the difference betwixt the love of God, and the love of men! Men do love, where their love redounds to their benefit and advantage: Yea, the love of saints to God, though it should be purely for himself, yet there is real, lasting, the greatest benefits redounding to them thereby: But the love of God is altogether pure in this respect, that he is not profited by his love.

3. Urge thine heart till it be affected with this love of God, which is such manifest and undeniable love, as doth appear in sending of his Son, 1 John iv. 9. "In this was manifested the love of God towards us, because that God sent his only begotten Son into the world, that we might live through him." Herein God doth commend his love to poor sinners, Rom. v. 8. "But God commendeth his love towards us, in that while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us." When Abraham would have offered up Isaac, the angel

of the Lord said unto him, Gen. xxii. 12. "Now I know that thou fearest God, seeing thou hast not withheld thy son, thine only son, from me." Especially if these differences be considered.

1. It was possible for Abraham to have another son, but it is not possible for God to have another begotten son.

2. God loved his Son better, infinitely better than Abraham loved his.

3. That Abraham was commanded by his superior to offer up his son; but there could be no law given unto God to send his Son.

4. Abraham received his Son from God, and therefore he was to be at his disposal, as all his creatures are; but God's Son was from himself, by eternal generation.

5. Abraham would have offered his son unto his Creator, and to God that was his friend; but God gave his Son for his creatures, and those that were his enemies.

6. Abraham offered up his son in purpose and intention; but God gave his Son to die for us really and indeed.

7. Isaac was to be offered by his Father's hands; but Christ was given to be slain by the hands of his enemies, that did hate him, and reproach him: therefore if Abraham's love to God was manifested by his offering up of Isaac his son, the love of God is much more manifested unto us, by giving us Christ his Son: and will not such manifest and undeniable love yet affect thy heart? Thus thou mightest proceed to other properties of the love of God in sending of his Son to suffer for thee,

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*Secondly*, Meditate and dwell in thy thoughts, upon the sufferings of thy Lord Redeemer, when he came into the world. It will be profitable before thou goest to the sacrament to view over the history of his sufferings, from his birth to his cross, Oh! what love was this, that God should give his Son, and the Son should give himself to die for thee! Never love like this, John xv. 13. "Greater love hath no man than this, that a man lay down his life for his friends." But greater love than this had the Son of God, when he laid down his life for his enemies. But if thine heart be not yet affected. Consider,

1. The dignity of the Sufferer; He that had the heavens for his throne, was laid in a manger; the Ancient of days became a babe; he that was above all, was abused more than all, he that was richer than any, being Lord of all was made so exceeding poor, that he had not where to lay his head: He that was the wisest in the world, that never man spake like him, was derided and laughed to scorn, and was reproached in all his offices: The King of kings, the great and only potentate is crowned with thorns: The Prophet of prophets had his face covered, and then smitten, and then they reproached him, saying, "Prophecy who it was that smote thee? To the great High Priest it was said in scorn, "He saved others, himself he cannot save." The most mighty is bound, the most innocent is scourged and condemned, the most lovely is despised, the physician

is wounded, that the sick patient may be healed; the Lord dieth for his servants. Oh! think of this, till thou feel thine heart to work in love, and to reach forth in burning desire after him.

2. The variety of his sufferings: He that was more precious than rubies, and all things that can be desired, are not to be compared to him, yet was sold for thirty pieces of silver, a goodly price that he was prized at by the sons of sinners, Zech. xi. 13. He was sold by one, denied by another, forsaken of all: He was buffeted and spit upon; a murderer preferred before him; while he lived, he was accounted a blasphemer; and when he died, he was reckoned amongst transgressors. I cannot tell what it was he did endure, but I can tell, it was his love that moved him to it. Oh! with what heart enflamed with love, should thou go unto that ordinance, wherein all this is represented to thy faith! O love! love! love! Art thou banished from my soul, that I do not feel thee more working in my heart, while I ponder these things within my thoughts? Oh my Lord! thou lovedst me in my blood, and when I see thee in thy blood, (if my heart were not so very bad) I could not but exceedingly love thee. When thou sawest me in my blood, it was polluted blood; but when I see thee in thy blood, I see, I find, I feel it is love inflaming blood.

*Thirdly*, Meditate and dwell in thy thoughts, upon the privileges and benefits that were purchased by the death of Christ: And surely if we may judge by the price that was paid for them, they must be very great. Some believing thoughts

upon this subject, would affect and warm thy heart, before thou goest to this table, and when thou art there, Oh! what a privilege is it to be united unto Christ, to be justified by his blood, to be sanctified by his Spirit, to have sin pardoned and subdued, to be reconciled unto God, to be adopted now, and saved hereafter! All these be blessed fruits that thou wilt find to grow upon the tree on which thy Saviour died: And there is much in these, in every one of these, to inflame thy love to God and Christ, and to stir up thy heart, to go unto that ordinance, where thou mightest be assured of them, by having them sealed to thy soul.

*Fourthly,* Meditate and dwell in thy thoughts upon thy sin, that thou mayest be humbled, because thy sins, were the procuring cause of all the sufferings of thy Lord. It was not for himself, but for thee; there was no guile in his mouth, nor wickedness in his heart: but the just suffered for the unjust. Thy sins were the Judas that betrayed him, the thorns that crowned him, the spears that pierced him, the nails that fastened him upon the tree. To see an ordinary man dying for thy fault, would it not affect thy heart? Yonder is one that is groaning, bleeding, dying for the evil I have done; Oh then how should thy affections work, when thou seest the Son of God bleeding (having his side opened, that thou mightest look into his heart) when thou seest him wounded, his hands and his feet pierced! When thou hearest him cry out with a loud voice, and seest him give up the ghost, and all this for

thy pride, unbelief, for thy worldliness and passions for thy disobedience and rebellion! How will this fill thy soul with sorrow and joy, thy eyes with tears, and thy mouth with praises? The one, because thou hast sinned, the other, because thy Lord would die to save thee from thy sins.

And here it would not be unuseful nor unreasonable, to produce the catalogue of thy sins that thou mayest see how far thou hast acted, to bring all these sorrows and sufferings upon thy loving Lord: For if thou shalt be saved by his death, surely then thy sins were the causes of his death; for it was the pardon of thy sin, the sanctifying of thy heart, and the saving of thy soul with the rest of God's elect, that he intended effectually to procure when he was lifted up upon the cross: But did not intend, or purpose the certain application of his death and sufferings unto reprobates; So that had it not been for the sake of God's elect, and chosen people, he never had exposed himself to so great sufferings, nor come down from heaven, nor gone up upon the cross, and will not this yet affect thine heart? Consider then, what thy sins have been before and since conversion, in their nature, in their numbers, and in all their aggravations; every one of which deserved the heavy and eternal wrath of God: O then. What loads and heaps of wrath they do all deserve! How much more all the sins of all the elect of God? Oh, what a burden did thy Saviour bear, when all these were laid upon him! What didst thou do against thy Lord, all those years thou livedst in an unconverted state? How



many sins didst thou commit every day, every week, and every month? When thou wast in that state in which thou didst nothing else but sin, when all thy thoughts were sin, and all thy words and actions, all were sin, all which thy Lord was to make satisfaction for, when he was dying on the cross? Dear Jesus, how unkind and cruel was then to thee, who wast so kind and merciful unto me!

But yet consider what thy sins have been, since thy Lord hath applied his death unto thee, which should have engaged thee to be more holy, and to walk more closely with him; but since thy sins in some respects have been worse than all thou didst before thou wast converted; for thou hast sinned against dearer love, and clearer light, thou hast sinned against the Lord that died for thee, and after, by his Spirit he hath applied his death unto thy soul: thou hast sinned after thou hast had a pardon of thy sin, and after he did assure thee of thy pardon: thou hast sinned against the Father, who did ordain thee unto life; against the Son, who did redeem thy soul from death, and purchase for thee eternal life; against the Holy Spirit, that hath been sitting and preparing thee to be partaker of the inheritance of the saints in light: thou hast sinned after rich and large experience of God's goodness and mercy to thy soul, after thou hast tasted the bitterness of sin, and sweetness of the love of God, after thou hast resolved against thy sin, and promised unto God upon thy knees, that if he should pardon thee, and tell thee, He had pardoned thee, thou wouldst

be more watchful for the time to come: God do what thou didst desire, but thou hast not done that which thou didst promise. Let all this trouble awaken thee to sorrow and repentance, before thou goest to the table of the Lord.

*Thirdly,* Then next proceed to solemn, serious, fervent prayer, and make thine addresses to the Lord: For all that thou canst think upon, and the course thou canst take, will not affect thine heart, except the God of heaven shall work thereon thy heart, and cause them to make some impression on thy soul: then go to God, and say (O Lord, I am ashamed to think how dully I think of these great affecting things, with which an hard and stupid heart I roll over in my mind: the death and sufferings of thy Son. O Lord, 'tis time that I should come to thee, that I might have some warmth from thee, that I might be inflamed with love; and were it possible, might be turned into love, that I might be made up all love. O Lord, I have been crying to get my heart affected with the death of Christ, and with thy love, and manifested to my soul therein: But O Lord, my heart is dull, and sometimes when the coal begins to glow, it is covered with ashes before I am aware: It is too great a work for me to raise my heart to him, who condescended to come down for me: If I could, I would, Lord, I would, but cannot: But this I know, that if thou wilt, thou canst: Yea, Lord, I do believe that both thou canst, and wilt, and therefore it is that I come to thee. O Lord, the time draws near in which I am to go unto thy table, but shall the

God of receiving come, before thou comest into  
my heart, to stir up thy graces in me, that I may  
be fitted to receive? True, Lord, I am unworthy,  
altogether unworthy of what I desire, but what  
thou dost to any, it is not because they be worthy,  
but because it pleaseth thee to do for thine, what  
they ask of thee, according to thy will. I am  
vile, O Lord, I am exceeding vile, but  
thou wilt clothe me with the righteousness of  
thy Son, and look upon me through his wounds,  
when thou wilt love me. Remember not my sins  
against thee, but remember what thy Son hath  
done and suffered for me: Thou commandest me  
in the sacrament, to remember what thy Son hath  
suffered, that I may be thankful unto thee, do  
thou remember what thy Son hath suffered, and  
thou gracious unto me, that I might see thy  
mercies, and perceive thy love when I am there,  
that I might come from thence with my pardon  
secured, my sins subdued, my soul strengthened to  
the ways of thy commandments, till thou  
wilt come and take me to thyself, where I shall  
see my Saviour in his glory, and behold my Lord  
that died for me on the cross.)

*Fourthly,* Next I would advise thee, (if thou  
hast opportunity) to discourse with others of such  
things that tend to raise, and not to damp thy  
heart, when thou hast been taking pains with thy-  
self in secret, when thou comest from thy chamber,  
take heed with whom thou dost converse, and  
what thou sayest: For if in secret thou didst find  
thy love excited, thy desires enlarged, thy faith  
strengthening upon Christ, frothy and unseasonable

discourse before thou goest might damp all again or if in secret thy heart was dull, yet God might bless a word or two in holy discourse, for the quickening of thy heart, and raising thy affection towards him. When thou fittest at thy table, by the fire the night before the sacrament, by speaking of the wonderful grace of God, the death of Christ, of the benefits thereby, of hope of heaven, of the coming of the Lord, of the glory there is above, of the sabbath the redemption of the Lord shall keep above, in the kingdom their Father. When the two disciples were discoursing of Christ's death and sufferings, Christ came and joined himself unto them, Luke xxii. 13, 14, 15. If you be two discoursing together, Christ might come and make the third, and then your heart will burn within you.

Having thus endeavoured to get thy heart prepared, as thou passest from thine house unto the house of God, from thine house unto the ordinance, watch over thy thoughts as thou walkest along, and let thy heart be working towards God and Christ. Oh that I might feel the power of Christ's death this day! Oh that I may have my pardon sealed to me this day! that I might be made conformable to Christ's death, see his smile, taste his love, and be strengthened with strength in my soul: And when thou comest to join in the public solemn worship with others of God's people, then mind the work that is before thee, and labour so to behave thyself in thy duty that thou mightest not lose the pains thou hast taken in preparing for the duty. And this brings me to the next conclusion, to answer this case or question.



Under what consideration should a believer eye the blood of Christ in the Lord's supper, and have his graces drawn forth into act, when he hath so consider it?

CHAP. X.

*Conclusion fourth, Containing twenty properties of the blood of Christ.*

A Believer should eye the blood of Christ in the Lord's supper, in the several properties, virtue and efficacy of it, till suitable graces thereby be drawn forth into act.

This conclusion consists of two parts.

*First*, That a believer should eye the blood of Christ in the several properties thereof, in efficacy and virtue.

*Secondly*, That the eyeing of the blood of Christ must draw forth these suitable graces that are to be exercised in the Lord's Supper.

For your help in the first of these, I would advise you to eye the blood of Christ in these properties, which also set forth the virtue and efficacy thereof.

1. Eye the blood of Christ in the sacrament, as it is a precious blood, 1 Pet i. 18, 19. "We are not redeemed with corruptible things as silver and gold, but with the precious blood of Christ," &c.

Now the blood of Christ is precious.

1. Comparative, by way of comparison, being more precious than all the precious things in nature.

ture, as silver and gold, which are vile, corruptible, and contemptible in comparison of the blood of Christ, and of no worth and value to redeem souls as this is.

2. Absolute, consider it absolutely in itself and so the dignity and excellency of his person makes it so exceeding precious, being the blood of that person that was God, as well as man, A8 xx. 28.

3. Effective, by way of casualty, because it doth produce precious effects: as,

1. It doth redeem precious souls.
2. It doth make precious people.
3. It doth confirm precious promises.
4. It doth purchase precious privileges.
5. It is the meritorious cause of precious graces.
6. It is the foundation of precious comforts.

2. Eye the blood of Christ in the sacrament as it is satisfying blood, and this it is, because it was such precious blood: it was most precious blood; therefore it was blood of value and merit. When the law of God was transgressed, the covenant of works by us was violated, the justice of God was wronged, and the sinner was indebted unto justice and did own the suffering of the penalty due for the breach of the law, which was, all miseries in this life, death itself, and the torments of hell for ever. But in the sacrament, eye Christ's blood as the payment of our debt, as shed, *nostro bono* for our good, and *nostro loco*, in our stead. Christ hath endured as much as our sins deserved, whose sufferings were satisfactory, though they were not eternal, and therefore were not eternal, because

they were satisfactory; eternity of torment, not being essential to the punishment due to sin, but accidental, upon supposition, that the sufferings of sinners cannot satisfy, if the damned could satisfy God's justice, by lying in hell ten thousand millions of years, at the expiration of those years they should come forth: but because they can never satisfy, therefore they must for ever suffer.

But Christ's blood is satisfying blood, because it was a sufficient price which he laid down for the redeeming of his people, Mat. xx. 28. Christ came to give his life by shedding of his blood, *lutron*, a ransom and price of redemption for many, as when the price is paid, the creditor is satisfied; so when Christ's blood was shed, God's justice was satisfied, 1 Tim. ii. 6. "Who gave himself a ransom for all," *antilutron*, a counter price, the word signifies, a price that is paid by another, which the offender, or the captive person could not pay for himself, when the life of one is bought out by the death of another. O wonderful and astonishing love of Christ! that would lay down life for life; He laid down his life, that we may have life, then when you sit under Christ's cross at the Lord's supper, look upon the blood you see there shed, and pouring out, to be satisfying blood.

*Thirdly*, Eye the blood of Christ in the sacrament, as pacifying and reconciling blood; and it is therefore pacifying blood, because it was satisfying blood. If God had not been satisfied for sin, he had never been pacified to the sinner: but when sin was expiated, God was appeased, Rom.

iii. 25. "Whom God hath set forth to be a propitiation, through faith in his blood." 1 John ii. 2. "He is the propitiation for our sins;" by his blood God's wrath is turned aside, and he becomes propitious to believing souls, Col. i. 20. "Having made peace through the blood of his cross, by him to reconcile all things to himself." Sin made the breach, but the blood of Christ makes peace betwixt God and the sinner, Eph. ii. 13. 14. "Ye who sometimes were far off, are made nigh by the blood of Christ." Sin sets us at a distance from God, but the blood of Christ bringeth us nigh unto him; for he is our peace; that is, our peace-maker. Oh blessed is such a peace-maker between God and man! 2 Cor. v. 19. "God was in Christ, reconciling the world unto himself." Consider it then as such.

*Fourthly*, Eye the blood of Christ in the sacrament, as purchasing blood: by this he purchased his church and people, Acts xx. 28. "Feed the church of God, which he hath purchased with his own blood." By his blood he hath bought us out and out, (*i. e.*) quite out of the hands of justice, quite out of the power of the devil, and sin; 1 Cor. vi. 20. "For ye are bought with a price." But besides the purchasing of our persons, he hath purchased and bought by his blood all things necessary for grace and glory, for peace and comfort; He hath purchased enough to supply all your wants, be they never so many, be they never so great: eye it then as purchasing blood.

*Fifthly*, Eye the blood of Christ in the sacra-

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ment, as justifying blood, as that which makes you righteous in the sight of God, though you have no righteousness of your own, in which you may dare to sit before God at his table, or stand before him at his tribunal, Rom. v. 9. "Much more then, being now justified by his blood, we shall be saved from wrath through him." Christ's blood is your righteousness, it is imputed to you for your justification.

*Sixthly,* Eye the blood of Christ in the sacrament, as pardoning blood, as that by which you have the full and free and everlasting pardon of all your sins. If Christ had never died, you had never been pardoned; "For without the shedding of blood, there is no remission," Heb. ix. 22. But through this blood of Christ we have redemption, to wit, the forgiveness of sins, Eph. i. 7. Col. i. 14. The blood of Christ is that which procures pardon for you, and seals the promise of pardon to you; think on it as such.

*Seventhly,* Eye the blood of Christ in the sacrament, as heart purifying blood, as it is blood of value and merit, so it is a blood of virtue and spirit. Adam's blood was staining blood, and this corruption runs in all blood; but the blood of Christ is purifying and cleansing blood, Heb. ix. 13, 14. "For if the blood of bulls, and of goats, and the ashes of an heifer sprinkling the unclean, sanctifieth to the purifying of the flesh: How much more shall the blood of Christ, who through the eternal Spirit, offered himself without spot to God, purge your consciences from dead works to serve the living God?" It must be physick made

of blood, that must purge our consciences, 1 John i. 7. "And the blood of Jesus Christ his Son cleanseth us from all sin." Rev. i. 5. "Who loved us and washed us from our sins in his own blood." It was not only pure blood, but it is purifying blood: it was not only holy blood, but it is sanctifying blood. Oh! how great was that love of Christ, that would give his pure, precious, sinless, and princely blood, to be the laver, in which our filthy and polluted souls, by dipping into it, might be made clean. Look upon it then as purifying, sanctifying, cleansing blood.

*Eightly*, Eye the blood of Christ in the sacrament, as pleading blood, Heb. xii. 24. "The blood of sprinkling speaketh better things than the blood of Abel." Abel's blood did plead against the offender, but the blood of Christ pleadeth for the believer.\* Abel's blood did cry for vengeance, but the blood of Christ doth cry for mercy. Satan pleads against you, and the law pleads against you, and in many things, and at many times, your own conscience cry out against you, all crying out to God, Lord, this man hath had so many vain thoughts, and hath made so many dead prayers, and hath neglected so many duties: but as soon as ever Satan can put in his bill against you, Christ casts it out of the court of heaven, and pleadeth for you with the Father; he hath so sinned, but so many wounds were made in my side and heart for him, so many drops of blood I have shed for these very sins. Your sin also doth cry against you, and the cry of sin is a very loud cry, that reacheth unto hea-

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ven, Gen. xviii. 20. "The Lord said, because the cry of Sodom is great, and because their sin is very grievous." Mark, grievous sins make a great cry; but yet there is a louder cry in the voice of Christ's blood, that is entered into the heavens. If you fear the cry of your sin should be louder, greater than the cry of your prayers, yet be comforted, it is not greater than the cry of Christ's blood, for it is pleading blood.

*Ninthly*, Eye the blood of Christ in the sacrament, as comforting blood, that it must needs be, because of all the former properties already mentioned. It is blood that pleadeth for you, and it is blood that speaketh peace unto you. It is blood that satisfied God's justice, and pacifieth God's anger, and therefore it is blood that might quiet your conscience, and comfort your heart: it is cooling blood, the soul that is scorched with fiery apprehensions of God's burning displeasure, might be cooled by one drop of the blood of Christ. The wounds of your conscience, and the wounds of Christ brought together, will make work: the wounds of Christ shall heal the wounds of your conscience; your wounds are fostering killing wounds, but the wounds of Christ are healing comforting wounds. There is no such solid, lasting comfort, as that which is fetcht from the blood of Christ.

*Tenthly*, Eye the blood of Christ in the sacrament, as heart softening blood: as that which can dissolve the most stony heart, as that which can break the hardest sinner. This blood once applied to those that were so hard hearted to spill

this blood, I mean, the Jews, who are hardened to a proverb, viz. (Do you think I am an hard hearted Jew?) will turn this rock of their heart into a fountain of tears, Zech. xii. 10. "They shall look upon me whom they have pierced, and they shall mourn for him, as one mourneth for his only son, (that is, great mourning) and shall be in bitterness for him, as one that is in bitterness for his first-born." Oh! lay your heart a sleeping in this blood, and try if it be not softening blood.

*Eleventhly,* Eye the blood of Christ in this sacrament, as sin mortifying blood; it is indeed soul-saving blood, but it is sin killing blood; and therefore it saves your soul, because it kills your sin: as that phylic saves a man's life, which removeth his sickness: that which is life to your soul, is death to your sin. In the sacrament you must look upon your sin, as that which was the death of your Lord; and look upon your Lord as one that is the death of your sin: sin drew out the life-blood of Christ; and the blood of Christ shed will draw out the life-blood of sin. Here you may behold these two great combatants both fighting, both bleeding, both dying, and they are reciprocal causes of each others deaths; Christ he bleeds, and sin it bleeds; Christ dies, and sin dies. But Christ gets the victory, for Christ dieth and riseth again, and lives for evermore; but sin once dead, liveth never more.

Oh! come cast your sins, those cursed Egyptians, into the Red-sea of Christ's blood, and they shall be drowned to death, and never live to reign over you more: Your soul shall be safe by passing

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through this Red-sea, but your sins shall fall and die therein. This blood will kill your pride, and mortify your earthly mindedness, and subdue all your inordinate affections; yea, the whole body of sin by this blood shall be destroyed, Rom. vi. 6. "Knowing this, that our old man is crucified with him, that the body of sin might be destroyed, and henceforth we should not serve sin." Gal. vi. 14. "But God forbid that I should glory, save in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom the world is crucified unto me, and I unto the world." Christ's cross is a Christian's glory, because it puts his sin to an open shame, in crucifying his lusts to death. Oh then bring your strong corruptions to the blood of Christ, for it is a sin-killing blood.

*Twelfthly,* Eye the blood of Christ in the sacrament, as quickening blood; the blood that did flow from Christ's heart, it was warm blood; and believe me, it will warm your heart: it is quickening blood, though it be killing blood: it lays your sin sprawling within you, and dying in your heart, but will give life unto your heart, John vi. 53. "Except ye eat the flesh of the Son of man, and drink his blood, ye have no life in you." If you drink it, then it will enliven you. Sin hath often deadened your heart, and the world hath often deadened your affections, but the blood of Christ will put life into both. The blood of Christ, it is the life, of all your duties, it will make you pray with life, and hear with life, and discourse of the things of God, and the life to come, with life, the blood of Christ, is the life of

all your graces, it will make you act faith with life, it will make you love with life, it will make you sorrow and repent with life: the blood of Christ is the life of your comforts. Oh then bring your dead heart, and dull affections to the blood of Christ, it will quicken and enliven them for it is an everlasting blood.

*Thirteenthly*, Eye the blood of Christ in the sacrament, as a blood of sprinkling, as a blood applicable, and to be actually applied to your soul; that you may say here is blood, and it is mine: here is blood shed, and it was for me: here is blood to be sprinkled, and I hope one drop will fall upon my soul, Heb. xii. 24. "Ye are come to Jesus the mediator of the new covenant, and to the blood of sprinkling." 1 Peter i. 2. "Elect according to the foreknowledge of God the Father, through sanctification of the Spirit, and sprinkling of the blood of Jesus Christ." Heb. ix. 19. "Moses took the blood of calves, and of goats, with water, and scarlet, wool, and hyssop, and sprinkled both the book, and all the people." Heb. x. 22. "Let us draw near with a true heart, in full assurance of faith, having our hearts sprinkled from an evil conscience, and our bodies washed with pure water." The blood of Christ was spilt upon the cross, and it will be sprinkled on your conscience at the sacrament. It is not the blood of Christ poured out, that will save you; but the blood of Christ sprinkled on your heart will.

*Fourteenthly*, Eye the blood of Christ in the sacrament, as Satan conquering blood. The de

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il put it into Judas' heart to betray Christ, and into the Jews heart to murder Christ; but by his death and blood shed he overcame the devil; and when he was bleeding to death, he triumphed over all infernal fiends, Col. ii. 15. "And having spoiled all principalities and powers, he made a shew of them openly, triumphing over them in us." And by this blood of Christ, shall you be enabled to overcome the devil, Rev. xii. 10, 11. The accuser of the brethren is cast down which accuseth them before God day and night; and they overcame him by the blood of the Lamb."

*Fifteenthly*, Eye the blood of Christ in the sacrament, as sealing blood; as that which was poured out, not only to purchase heaven for you, but also to assure you of it. Christ's blood shed upon the cross, doth ratify and confirm the covenant of grace, Heb. ix. 15. "And for this cause he is the mediator of the New Testament, that by means of death, for the redemption of the transgressors that were under the first Testament, they which are called might receive the promise of eternal inheritance. Verse 16. "For where a testament is, there must also of necessity be the death of the testator." Verse 17. "For a testament is of force after men are dead." So then, when you see Christ's blood shed, remember God hath promised believers pardon and eternal life, and this promise is of force. Christ hath bequeathed precious legacies to his people, and his will and testament is of force for his blood is shed.

*Sixteenthly*, Eye the blood of Christ in the sacrament, as innocent blood; consider there it was

the just that suffered for the unjust; in his hand there was no wickedness, in his heart no sin, in his mouth no guile. The innocent bleeds for the guilty, Mat. xxvii. 4. "I have betrayed the innocent blood;" and will it not affect you, to see innocent blood thus shed?

*Seventeenthly*, Eye the blood of Christ in the sacrament, as a copious blood; as being sufficient for you, as if none had been saved or justified thereby, but yourself: there is fulness of merit in it, it is a fountain, Zech. xiii. 1. "In that day there shall be a fountain opened." Now a fountain is,

1. Living water, and the blood of Christ is living blood.

2. It is running water, it is communicative; it overflows, it feeds the little rivulets; and the channels in which the blood of Christ doth run are the hearts of God's elect.

3. It is plentiful water, there is but a little in a cistern, but abundance in the fountain.

4. It is inexhaustible, and perpetual; it overflows, and yet ever flows; such is the blood of Christ; Christ hath not expended all the virtue of his blood upon David and Peter, and Paul, and the saints that are already got to glory; but there is enough for you: it is a copious blood, if you consider the real quantity of blood, which Christ at six several times did shed. Six times Christ bled for you.

1. In his circumcision. 2. In the garden.  
3. When he was scourged. 4. When he was crowned with thorns. 5. When his hands and

feet were pierced with nails; the real blood; but the efficacy of it.

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his feet were nailed to his cross. 6. When his side was pierced with a spear. Thus if you consider the real quantity of his natural blood, it was much; but if you consider the supernatural efficacy of it, it was infinite.

*Eighteenthly*, Eye the blood of Christ in the sacrament, as perfecting blood; it was the fruit of his blood that you have any grace, and it is the fruit of his blood that your grace is growing and increasing grace. You complain your grace is small, your love is little unto God, your faith is weak, and your desires feeble and faint after Christ; but Christ's blood shall make you perfect, Christ will so moisten your grace, by laying his blood often at the root thereof, that it shall grow, and you grow from grace to grace, till you come from grace to glory, Heb. xiii. 20, 21. "Now be God of peace that brought again from the dead our Lord Jesus Christ, that great Shepherd of his sheep, through the blood of the everlasting covenant, make you perfect in every good work that he do his will."

*Nineteenthly*, Eye the blood of Christ in the sacrament, as cementing blood; as that which cements the hearts and affections of God's people one to another: we are all made to drink of one blood, which should provoke us to be of one heart. As Christ shed his blood, and thereby manifested that he loved all his people; So when we partake of it in the sacrament we are engaged to love one another, as he hath loved us, 1 Cor. i. 31. Eph. 13, 14, 15, 16.

*Twentiethly*, Eye the blood of Christ in the

sacrament, as such blood that maketh all you to be pleasing unto God. Your best doings would be provocations unto God, had it not been for Christ's dying. If Christ had not died, your very praying would have been the provoking of God: it is the sufferings and the blood of Christ that maketh all your religious duties to be acceptable unto God. This is the sweet incense which he offers with the prayers of the saints. Rev. viii. 3. Through the blood of the everlasting covenant, is that wrought in you, and by which is pleasing in the sight of God: and indeed in this respect you should eye the virtue and efficacy of the blood of Christ in every duty: your tears are but a puddle of water, and your righteousness but rags, without this blood of Christ.

Thus far to the first part of the conclusion, what respects you may eye the blood of Christ in this ordinance, for the affecting of your heart and exciting of your graces, which are next to be spoken of, for the improving of the blood of Christ for your comfort and spiritual advantage in this ordinance. The graces to be exercised, chiefly. 1. Faith. 2. Love. 3. Desire. 4. Joy. 5. Sorrow. 6. Hatred unto sin.

## CHAP. XI.

*Shewing how faith is to be exercised at the Lords table.*

1. **W**HEN you thus consider the blood of Christ in the sacrament, set faith

work. A crucified Christ, is the object of justifying faith: and one that hath a quick sighted faith, will perceive enough in the blood of Christ, whereby he may resolve his doubts, scatter his fears, supply his wants, as that which is an universal medicine against all soul distempers.

Let faith make use of this blood in respect of God.—Satan.—Yourself, *Viz.* In Appealing to God.—Replying to Satan.—Applying it to yourself.

1. When you are at the Lord's table, let your faith be busied in appealing from this blood to God: after this manner,

Lord, of myself I am exceeding vile, even by nature made worse than the very beasts of the field, than the crooked toad, or the most venomous serpent: yet is not here precious blood, which thou hast shed to make me precious in thy sight? Though without it, I acknowledge, I am loathsome and abominable before thee, yet by it I trust I shall become one of thy jewels one of those that are honourable in thine eyes: Lord, be not offended, for thou thyself thus speaketh of thy people, else I durst not have thought it, had I not found thee thus speaking in thy prophet,

Isa. xliii. 4. "Since thou wast precious in my sight, thou hast been honourable, and I have loved thee." O Lord, these are thy words, and I believe them, and am humbly bold through this precious blood, to apply them with it unto myself.

Lord, I have violated thy law, and broken thy covenant, and most fearfully sinned against thee,

yet is not here satisfying blood? I was an enemy unto thee, yet is not here reconciling blood? I this I do believe thou art now my friend, and my appeased God.

Lord, I was in worse than Egyptian bondage, a captive to the devil, a very drudge and slave unto my lust: But is not here purchasing blood? I am bought with it, as with a price, which the Son hath paid for my ransom. Through this humbly trust I am delivered and redeemed. I am indeed under soul pressing wants: I want peace and comfort, I want love unto thee, and more holy fear and dread unto thee: but is not here purchasing blood. And wilt thou be offended, if I rely upon thee for supplies, especially since I ask nothing, but what this blood hath bought and purchased for me?

Lord, I have no righteousness of mine own, but what is as filthy rags before thee, when I would be justified in thy sight; I am ashamed of my prayers, and I blush to see my best performances, but is not here justifying blood? Is not crucified Christ made of thee, to be righteous to thy people? By thine assistance, I fiducially will rely upon this crucified Saviour, to make me righteous in thy pure eyes; and disclaiming all my duties, reach forth the hand of faith to be justified by this blood.

Lord, I am a guilty sinner, and my sins are both many for number, and heinous for their nature and aggravating circumstances; I have such a sinful heart within this breast, that I know not the man that hath a worse. If my fellow com-

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communicants should know my heart, they would look and stare upon me, to consider that I who have so long professed myself to be thy disciple, should yet come with such a proud and worldly heart unto thy table. I am guilty of sins against love and light, against thy mercy, and thy judgments, against thy spirit, and my own conscience; yea, against the very law of nature written in my heart, that a very heathen would abhor to do what I have not blushed to do, yet is not here pardoning blood, that can pardon great sins, as well as small, and many as easily as few? Will not mountain sins, as well as moll-hill sins, be covered in this blood? Lord thy Son hath died for these sins, therefore I trust I shall not be damned for these sins, though by them I have deserved greatest condemnation. Lord, for this blood, I do believe that thou wilt pardon me, and by this blood wilt seal my pardon to me: I trust in this blood for a pardon; yea, in this will I trust, that thou wilt pardon me.

Lord, I am not only guilty, but polluted; sin hath as well defiled me, as it would condemn me. Lord, I have a heart as black as hell, as filthy and unclean, as the unclean spirits themselves; but is not here blood to wash me, as well as pardon me? to purge me from my filth, as well as save me from the guilt of all my sins? to this cleansing blood I bring my defiled soul, and I will believe that thou wilt wring and make me clean. Lord, there is blood, and what may hinder but I may wash and be clean?

Lord, my sin hath stopped my mouth, and I

cannot plead my own cause before thy majesty, but is not here pleading blood? let that plead for me, this is my advocate; my sins plead against me, but here is blood that pleadeth for me, and I do believe thou wilt rather hear the pleading of thy Son's blood for me, than the pleading of my sins against me.

Lord, my soul is cast down within me, and I am often filled with thy terrors, till I am almost distracted; there are many things that do discomfort me; my sins they do discomfort me, and my very duties, as I do perform them, do discomfort me; but is not here comforting blood? Oh! this blood is *aquaviva* to my swooning and dejected soul, I will lay the mouth of my faith to the bleeding wounds made in thy Son, and will suck and draw till my soul is comforted.

Alas! O Lord, my sins have not only made me filthy, but have hardened my heart: sometimes I may feel it recent, and to give a little, but otherwhiles it is hard and stony within my breast. Sometimes I think never heart so hard as mine, but is not here heart softening blood? If there be not, let me go away as hardened as I came; but if there be, let me feel the virtue, and the power of it, in making in me a heart of flesh. O Lord, I will lay my heart a-sleeping in this blood, and will believe that then it will be softened.

Alas! O Lord, my sins are very strong and powerful within me, that sometimes I think they do not only rage, but reign: sometimes they act so mightily in my heart, that I am apt to think there is nothing but sin in my soul, and no prin-

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principle of grace to check and to control it: my pride is strong, my passion is strong, and my lusts exceeding mighty; but is not here sin mortifying blood, that can take down the strength and power of it? this blood hath subdued it in others, and now I will believe it will subdue it in my soul.

Oh, my Lord, my heart is often dead and dull, that I cannot pray with life unto thee, that I cannot be lively in thy service; fain I would, but so, my heart is dead, and cannot; but is not here quickening and enlivening blood? why then wilt thou suffer such a heart to be in me? Lord, wilt thou give me leave to apply it to myself, that I may be quickened to thy service? yea, I know it is thy will I should so do: now, Lord, my heart is warm.

Thus you may in respect of God, by faith make use of all the properties of the blood of Christ, you may go on in all the rest. Let it suffice, that I have shewed you, how faith may be set on work in the former particulars.

*Secondly,* When you thus consider the blood of Christ in the sacrament, set faith on work to reply unto the devil. He will be with you at the sacrament, to rob you of your comfort, and to hinder you of that joy that here you might be filled with; but by faith in the blood of Christ, you may resist him: and whatsoever his accusations are, from some of these properties of the blood of Christ, you may put the devil unto silence.

Doth the devil cast your sins in your teeth, and rank them in order before your eyes? doth he tell you of your pride and ignorance? doth he

tell you of your formal duties, and your want of close walking with God? you may reply, Oh mine enemy! so far as there is truth in thy accusations, I am as willing to accuse myself; yea, before I came unto this ordinance, thou heardest me accuse, and judge, and condemn myself; but lo, Oh mine enemy! here is blood that hath been shed for me, that was not shed for thee; here is blood to purchase pardon for my sins, which was not shed to pardon thee, Oh! how would such a believing reply make the devil to sink away, and leave thee to make the best improvement that thou canst of this holy supper! what sayest thou, Oh! thou enemy of my soul's salvation and comfort? hast thou ought to lay unto my charge? it may be, he will tell thee of the hardness of thy heart: but thou mayest reply, because I found and felt it hard, therefore came I unto his blood to have it softened. What now, Satan? It may be, he will tell thee, of thy dulness in thy holy duties; thou mayest reply, I did indeed, to the grief and burden of my soul, find too much deadness upon my heart; and therefore I have brought it to the quickening blood of my dearest Lord, and he will put life into it: what now, Oh mine enemy! indeed there is nothing that Satan can charge upon you, or bring in against you, but from one of these properties of the blood of Christ, you may put him to the worst. You may go on in any of the rest, as you have occasion to make use of them.

*Thirdly*, When you thus consider the blood of Christ, you may set faith on work, in applying



to yourself, and stopping the mouth of your own conscience, clamouring against you at the Lord's table, or else rightly and justly accusing of you: for conscience may know more evil by you, than the devil can, viz. many vain thoughts, and inward sinful workings of your heart, but you may use some of these excellencies of the blood of Christ, upon grounds sufficient to quiet and to slay it. After this manner, thou tellest me. Oh, my conscience! of such blasphemous vain distracting thoughts. I do subscribe unto my accusation; but lo, O my conscience! here is blood that hath satisfied God, and wilt thou not be satisfied? here is blood that hath reconciled God unto me, notwithstanding those my sins; and oh, my conscience! wilt thou not then be reconciled unto me? For the sake of this blood, God be at peace with me, and wilt thou not? Thus you may procure peace of conscience, and upon lasting grounds go away with firm peace concluded betwixt God and yourself.

Let faith make particular application of this blood, in all its virtues and efficacies, and say, Look here, O my soul! here is pardoning blood, and it is thine; here is quickening, softening blood, and it is thine; here is justifying, sanctifying, bleeding blood, and this belongs to thee. Thus for the drawing forth of faith to do its work at the Lord's supper.

## C H A P. XII.

*Shewing how love, desire and other graces are to be exercised in the sacrament.*

II. **W**HEN you thus consider the blood of Christ, then draw forth holy love to do its parts, as faith hath done its. And indeed when faith goes thus before, it will be more easy to act all the rest. Let but love see with faith's eyes, and it will quickly be inflamed. Let faith make application, and love will quickly feel the benefit of it, and shew it in its actings: Oh! how will love flutter in your breast, when it shall behold that precious blood that did redeem you and reconcile you unto God! Oh then, bespeak your love for God and Christ; look here, O my soul! what love was this in God to give his Son for thee? what love was this in Christ to give his life and blood for thee? precious blood for a vile and worthless sinner; O look again, O my soul! here is pardoning blood for thee a sinner; here is softening blood for thee an hardened sinner; and here is reconciling blood for thee, who was once an enemy unto God. Oh, what love is this! Oh, never love like to this! hath God and Christ thus loved thee, O my sinful soul! and wilt not thou love him back again? hath God sent his Son to die, and said unto him, O my well-beloved Son, go and die for yonder sinner, and thereby commend my love unto him? O Lord, this love of thine doth overcome me, O Lord thou hast out-loved me, if now my love were better, thou

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shouldst have it but such as it is, thou shalt have it. Make it more, and make it better, and still it shall be set on thee. O my soul! canst thou behold justifying blood, and not love him that shed it for thee? Canst thou behold precious, quickening, softening blood, and not love him that laid it down to quicken, and to soften thy heart, and redeem thee from hell, sin, and wrath?

III. When you thus consider the blood of Christ, then let desires be upon the wing, to fetch in unto your soul such things that this blood by its efficacy and virtue doth purchase and procure. O here is pardoning blood! Oh, that I could have the pardon of my sins! here is sealing blood; Oh, that I could have my pardon sealed and confirmed to my soul! Oh, that now my sins might be subdued by this blood! Oh, that my dull heart might be enlivened by this blood! Oh, that now I may receive more darts of love to God, and faith in Christ, which this blood hath purchased for me! Oh, that now my poor distressed soul may have rich experience of this softening, healing virtue of the blood of Christ, which he hath so willingly and freely poured out for me.

IV. When you look thus upon the blood of Christ, let your soul rejoice in God, and call upon all the powers of your soul to joy and delight in God and Christ. Oh, can you think, that by this blood you are justified, and pardoned, and not rejoice? that you are redeemed and reconciled by this blood, and not rejoice? Is it possible you should feel the quickening power, and comforting influences of this blood, and not rejoice? Is it

possible you should believe this blood is pleading for you, and not rejoice? O Lord, my soul doth joy in thee: my soul doth magnify the Lord, my Redeemer. O how good is it to be here? O what comfort is this my soul is thus delighted with? O what comfort is this I feel so warm about my heart? there is no joy like unto it, I never found any joy like unto it.

V. When you thus consider the blood of Christ in all those excellencies, O then, be grieved that you have so long neglected it, that you did that which was the cause why precious blood was spilt; that you should thrust your sin into his side, to fetch his blood from his very heart. O Lord, was I the cause this blood was shed? Was it my pride and vain glory that did set a crown of thorns upon this crucified bleeding Christ? Was it my unbelief, and apostacy from God, that broached his blessed heart from whence I see these streams of blood so plentifully gushing forth, that I may be washed therein, and justified thereby? What, was I the cause of it, and yet must I have the benefit of it? Did Christ suffer me to murder him, and stab, and pierce his very heart, and then pardon me, and save me, when I had done? O Lord, my soul is grieved, my heart is sorrowful. O that I had never sinned! Lord, I hope, if my sins were undone again, I should never do them. Oh, that since this blood is shed, it might fall upon my heart, that it may be dissolved into tears! Oh, that my eye may weep, when I see my Saviour's heart to bleed! Oh, that my heart may be rent asunder when I see my Sa-

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Is this blood such quickening blood? Then,  
Lord, I am ashamed that my heart hath been,  
and is so dull, that I have brought such a dead  
heart to behold my dying Lord. But if it be a  
quickening blood then, O that I might feel and  
find it to be so!

Is this such pleading blood? Then, Lord what  
did I mean, when I did plead so long against it?  
When I framed arguments and excuses to keep  
me from coming under the power and influence  
of it?

Is this indeed such mortifying blood? Oh then,  
what did I do when I did neglect to bring my  
sins unto it, but to consult how they may live  
when Christ hath died, that they might be sub-  
dued?

Is there so many precious excellencies in this  
blood of Christ? Oh sinner! Wretch and fool  
that I was that did prefer any thing, every thing  
so long before it, and how so often trampled it  
under my feet.

But must I joy and sorrow too? Will not either  
sorrow keep me from rejoicing, or rejoicing pre-  
vent my sorrowing? No, both these may be, both  
these must be: this mixture medley of affection,  
doth well become a believer at the Lord's table.  
You may mourn that your sins did put Christ to  
death, and yet you may rejoice that Christ hath,  
and would die for your sins.

VI. When you thus consider the blood of  
Christ then let your soul hate and abhor your sin.

that was the cause of its effusion, and would have hindered, (if mercy had not prevented) its effectual timely application. Oh, that now your heart might rise against your sins, and that you might hate them while you live, with a perfect and implacable hatred! you do not love to see the knife that killed your friends, and will you love to think upon that sin that killed your Lord? Or will you ever do it with delight? Oh, hadst thou any love unto thy Lord, Oh, my soul! thou couldst not then but hate thy sin. Oh, now my soul! be wrought up to a heightened resolution, with greatest indignation and abhorrence to cast away thy sin. Now, Lord, I see that thou hast loved me, and I will hate my sins; and the more I taste of the sweetness of the blood of Christ, the more thou wilt cause my soul to hate my sin.

Thus I have given you my thoughts for your satisfaction in this question, how you should consider the blood of Christ in the sacrament, and have your graces exercised when you so consider it.

### CHAP. XIII.

*Conclusion Fifth, Shewing the necessity of examination after the sacrament.*

**T**HAT such as are partakers of the Lord's supper, should enquire after participation, what benefit they have received thereby.

There are some, that before the duty, take no pains to prepare themselves, and after the duty,

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do not reflect how they went, nor enquire what was it they got: after reflection is necessary, as well as previous examination. What good have I got? Should be a question we should put to ourselves after every duty we do perform. Had I any warmth of affection in it? Have I any more love to God, more desires after him, more ability to duty, to bear affliction, to resist temptation, to walk with God? This you should do after every prayer you make, after every sermon you hear, at the end of every Sabbath, and after every sacrament you receive. For want of this reflection, these evils follow.

*First*, For want of this, many think they be better, when indeed they be the worse. For want of strict and narrow examination before the sacrament, they think they had faith in Christ, love to God, and repentance for their sins: but what they had was but a counterfeit of faith and love, and other graces, as hypocrites may have: so for want of reflection after the sacrament, they might think they had some workings of faith, and love, and sorrow for sin, and joy in God; and yet it was not so, but something like to these, as hypocrites might sometimes have in their attendance on God at his table, and in hearing of the word, and other duties. Hypocrites might shed many tears at a sacrament, and might have some flashes of joy through a false apprehension, that this Christ did die for them, and hath applied this blood unto them, and that they are partakers of the benefits of his death, as grace, pardon, hopes of heaven, &c. and yet shall be for ever damned, for

not having any of these in truth and reality; and this mistake is very dangerous, and oftentimes pernicious: In as much as it doth strengthen the presumption of these mens hearts, when they do think their faith is strengthened, and are more confirmed in their false hopes of heaven, and eternal life, and often go away rejoicing at the thoughts of their good condition, and yet mightily for ever roaring among the damned, for their folly and mistake, and might bless God for that which they thought they received from him at the sacrament, and yet might be for ever cast from God, because they had not that grace which they thought they felt working in their hearts therein: therefore after examination is necessary.

*Secondly,* For want of examination after the sacrament, you will be kept from after humiliation and repentance for your sins committed at the table of the Lord. If you did review, and look back upon the frame of your heart, and find you have miscarried in your work and management in your duty, you should see what cause you have of lying low before the Lord for so great sin; as to get no good by such an ordinance, that tends so much to promote the work of grace in the heart, of them that come worthily to the same. Your heart, when the minister broke the bread, was not broken for your sin: when you took the bread, your heart was dull and dead, and did not reach forth the hand of faith, to lay hold upon Christ and his benefits, and apply them to yourself, and so did play the hypocrite before God, and your fellow-communicants: when the

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and wine was poured forth, and you saw how Christ did shed his blood for sinners, you could not drop a tear for your sins that caused it. Or if you did, it was not from a heart sensible of your sin, or of God's love unto your soul: when you took the cup and drank thereof, you did not remember Christ as you should have done: and while you were present at his table, your mind was filled with distracted thoughts, and your thoughts were wandering, when they should have been fixed upon God and Christ: and how shall you be humbled for this, if you do not reflect that you are guilty of such sins? And how shall you confess this before the Lord upon your knees, when you do not afterwards consider how it was with you at that time? And how great a sin is this, and how bad is your heart, neither to be afflicted at the table of the Lord, nor to be afflicted in your soul after you are gone, that it was not so with you? This was your sin, while you were here, that you got no good thereby; and this is also your sin, that you do not bewail it when you come away: whereas it should be lamented from one sacrament to another, that your heart was indeed so bad, and out of frame, when it should have been delighting in God, and loving of God, and sorrowing for your sin.

*Thirdly,* For want of examination after the sacrament, you might receive good, and not perceive it; nay, perhaps deny it. As many that have grace, and yet think they have none: so many here might receive good, and yet think it not so. You go away and soon forget the workings of God upon your heart, and the workings

of your heart towards God: and so are tempted to believe it was no otherwise with you, than it may be with hypocrites in this ordinance: and because you do not seriously consider, and faithfully keep in your remembrance the experience you had from God, while you were there, you yield to this temptation when you are come away.

*Fourthly,* For want of reflection after the sacrament, you are not so thankful after the duty is done, for what you did receive, as else you would be. Many hypocrites go away and rejoice, when they should mourn: and many gracious souls go away and mourn, when they should rejoice; and both, because they do not afterwards reflect upon the inward workings of their hearts, to judge of them according to what indeed they were. God did come into your heart and humble it: God did come into your heart and break it: God did come into your heart, and caused it to abhor your sin, and to long after Christ, which you should remember while you live, to adore the riches of his grace, that he should look upon such sin and dust as you are, and cause you to feel such operations of his Spirit; that every time you go into secret, you should give him thanks for these his workings upon your heart: But how shall this be done, if you do not often reflect how it was with you, when you were there?

*Fifthly,* For want of reflection after the sacrament, you will oftentimes take up with the bare performance of the duty, and rest in the work done: and rest satisfied that ye have eaten and drunk at the table of the Lord; though you have

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not eaten the flesh of Christ, nor drunk his blood: and it is too great a sign that you rest in the work done, when you do not consider afterwards, how you have done it, nor enquire, Did I please the Lord while I was eating? Did I please the Lord while I was drinking at his table? Did I eat in faith, and drink in faith, did I find God coming down into my soul by his grace and Spirit, and my soul ascending up to God by faith and love?

*Sixthly*, For want of this reflection after the sacrament, you will not be so earnestly desirous after renewed opportunities of receiving, nor have such longings in your soul to come again. One would think that the entertainment which God gives to his people at his table, the smiles that there they see in his face, the love that there they do perceive to be in his heart, and the favours there they receive from his hands, should stir up in their hearts such earnest breathings as these, O when might I come again! O when shall I be thus refreshed again! Christ was exceeding sweet unto my soul, his comforts were delightful to my heart; O when shall I return again unto his table, that I might have more of that, which on such a day I found! But if this be so much out of your thoughts, the other will be too much out of your desires.

*Seventhly*, For want of this reflection after the sacrament, you will be less experienced, and less acquainted with the workings of your own heart. If you reflect upon what your heart did promise when you were there, and how you have come

short of your promise; how your heart did work in hatred unto sin, and how afterwards (if it be not strictly watched) it will be ready to consent and yield unto it. If you thus compare yourself, what you are at the sacrament, and what your heart will be if not heedfully observed afterwards, you would be more acquainted with the deceitfulness of your own heart.

*Eightly,* For want of this reflection after the sacrament, you will be fuller of doubts, and more empty of comforts than else you would be. Sometimes God did so powerfully work upon your heart, when you were at his table, in drawing forth your love to him, your hatred to, and sorrow for your sin, that you could not deny that you had grace: but at another time you might lose the sense of this, when it might not be so with you; and when the devil doth assault you, to persuade you that you have no grace, because now you do not feel the workings of it; but if you would reflect how it was with you at such a time at the sacrament, you might repel this temptation: though I do not now find the lively workings of my love to God, yet at such a time in the sacrament I did; though now I do not find my heart to break, but is dull, and out of frame, yet at such a day in the sacrament I did; then I found my sins my burden, and the breaking of my heart: then did I find my heart to burn in love with God and Christ, and this will help to resolve your present doubts, and to expel your present fears, and to resist this temptation of the devil: but if

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*Ninthly,* The sacrament of God, whether were the old comfort and do not that he will soon for not meet the Spirit your soul for it.

*Tenthly,* If it should communicate would you your end

*Eleventhly,* And too sacrament require, what

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work you do not reflect, you might lose so good an  
evidence of the truth of your grace.

*Ninthly*, For want of this reflection after the  
sacrament, you will be a grief to the Spirit of  
God, whether you did meet with God, or no;  
whether it was well, or ill with you, when you  
were there: If you did meet with God, and if he  
did comfort your heart; or humble you for sin,  
and do not reflect, you grieve the Spirit of God,  
that he was so kind and loving unto you, and you  
so soon forget it to be thankful for it: If you do  
not meet with God, and do not reflect, you grieve  
the Spirit, that though he be absent himself from  
your soul, you do so soon forget it, to be humbled  
for it.

*Tenthly*, It argues your end was not so right  
as it should have been; had you aimed indeed at  
communion with God, and increase of grace,  
would you not enquire, whether you had attained  
your end?

*Eleventhly*, It argues great carelessness of heart,  
and too great a slighting of the benefits of the  
sacrament: did you esteem them, you would en-  
quire, whether you had enjoyed them?

*Twelfthly*, It argues you were not so wise for  
your soul, as you were for your body; not so  
wise for the things of heaven, as for the things of  
this world: for after you have been trading for  
the things of this world: you will cast up your  
accounts, to see what are your gains, and what  
is added to your stock.

*Thirteenthly*, This will provoke God in after  
duties to withdraw from you, and to deny that

to you in following ordinances, which you would not so much as enquire, whether you had got in in former duties.

*Fourteenthly*, You may decline in grace, and be on the losing hand, and not easily and quickly perceive it, and fall into a frame of dulness before you are aware.

Therefore let it be your constant practice, as to examine yourself before, that you may know your fitness for this duty; so examine yourself afterwards, that you may know whether you are the better or the worse by this duty: for every one is made better, or made worse by coming to the Lord's table. Physic makes the body better or worse. All God's ordinances will have their operation: the word is a favour of life, or death to every one that hears it, 2 Cor. ii. 15, 16. So many are the worse by coming to the Lord's table, 1 Cor. xi. 17. You come together not for the better, but for the worse. That you are not the better, is *satis culpabile*, sufficiently blame worthy: but that you are the worse, this is *male aune* *sis*, the aggravation of your sin: *Grande id nefas, quando medicina non modo non proficit argo, sed in venenum vertitur*: it goes ill with that man whose food and physic is turned into poison, and proves to be his bane: Not for his profit, but his detriment.

Here for your satisfaction, I shall enquire after these things.

1. What are the causes that some go to the Lord's table, and receive no benefit thereby?

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2. How may a believer know when he doth receive benefit thereby?

3. What must a believer do, if upon this search he findeth some advantage by this ordinance? And what if he do not?

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C H A P. XIV.

*Containing the reasons why some receive no benefit by the Lord's Supper.*

THE reasons why some are not the better by going to the Lord's table, are such as these.

*First,* Because they are not habitually prepared for it; they have not these necessary qualifications, nor habitual graces, that must be in that man's heart that shall be benefited by the sacrament, they had no life, and therefore are not capable of growth and nourishment: growth of grace, supposeth truth of grace: they that have not first received a whole Christ in the gospel, in all his offices, cannot receive a broken Christ in the sacrament: They are not united unto Christ, and where there is no union, there can be no communion. They are not engrafted into Christ, and therefore they receive no fruit from the cross of Christ. All the benefit that must come in by the sacrament, must be by the exercise of grace, of faith, and love, and sorrow for sin, &c. But they that have it not, cannot exercise it.

*2dly,* Because many that are habitually prepared, may be too slight in actual preparation: they did not seriously, thoroughly search their

hearts, and lives, nor enquire after their sins and wants: they do not solemnly, but slightly pray to God before hand: they do not quicken their hungerings after Christ, nor go with great believing expectations of receiving great things from God in this duty.

— And God will check you at his table, by withdrawing himself from you, for your neglect before you came. It may be you were busy about the world, when you should have been preparing for your duty; it may be you may be in your shop when you should have been in your chamber, or your closet. It may be God saw you reading your account-book, when you should have been reading the history of the death of Christ in the book of God, and should have been studying the book of your own heart; God saw you thinking of the world, when you should have been endeavouring to have warmed your heart in the believing thoughts of the blood of God, in the great transactions of man's redemption.

*Thirdly*, Because after diligent, actual preparation, you have rested in your foregoing duties, and exacted that for your preparations sake, which you must only receive for Christ's sake. It is hard to make diligent preparations, and then deny them when you have done, and expect all through Christ: And after our most serious preparations, to acknowledge them as nothing, and that it will be free grace, if God discover himself to us at his table. Sometimes you may observe, that after greatest enlargements in secret preparation, you have been most straitened in duty: Not that God

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displeased with your diligence in preparation, but that you lay too great a stress upon your spiritual duties, and mounted them up above their place, and would have made a Christ of your duties, and would have detracted from the merits of Christ in hoping that from God, because you had prepared, which you must only hope for, because Christ hath died: not but that you may, and ought to look after your prayers which you make, and see what returns the Lord doth give you: but there is a difference between an expectation of good things from God, according to your prayers and preparations, and between an expectation of good things from God, for your prayers and preparations; and yet you may disclaim this in word, and in your heart secretly rely upon them.

*Fourthly,* Because God is offended that some sweet and secret sin is too much favoured. Tho' there might be no reigning sin in you, which is consistent with the state of grace; yet there might be too much connivance and favour shewed to some particular sin: the reason now why God smiles no more upon your soul at his table, may be, because you frown no more upon your sin. God shews no more mercy to you at his table, because you shew no more severity against your sin; and must not God take it unkindly, when you come to commemorate the death of his Son, with too much kindness in your heart to sin, that was the cause of his death?

*Fifthly,* Because you were too remiss, and let down your spiritual watch in the time of receiv-

ing. You lost holy time at the holy sacrament by entertaining of, and being filled with vain distracting thoughts; when you were there, you should be careful to do nothing else, and to think of nothing else, but what is pertinent to the duty you are engaged in; your own heart will be frequently stragling, if you do not keep it, and the devil will be injecting thoughts of things of another nature; or will fill your mind with thoughts of holy things, but not pertinent to your present work; and if you would receive benefit by your receiving, you must say to Satan, as Nehemiah to Sanballat, when he would have diverted him from building of the wall, Neh. vi. 2, 3, 4. "Sanballat sent to him, saying, Come, let us meet together in some of the villages; but they thought to do me mischief. And I sent messengers to him saying, I am doing a great work, so that I cannot come down: why should the work cease while I leave it, and come to you? Yet he sent unto me four times after that sort, and I answered him after the same manner." When you are receiving, the devil will parley with you, but it is he who do you mischief, therefore reply unto him, I am doing a great work, so that I have no time to entertain thy suggestions. O mine enemy! I have other things to think upon, here is the death of my Lord; and his love in dying for me, to think upon; and why should this work cease while I entertain thy suggestions? So far as your thoughts wander, so far your work at the Lord's table stands still. And if Satan sollicit you four or more times, still answer after the same manner

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be as constant in resisting, as he is in soliciting, and you will find benefit by the duty, if you ply your work when you are there.

*Sixthly,* Because you have not conscientiously endeavoured to live up to resolutions made in former receivings; did you not there promise, If God would please to manifest himself unto you, and warm your heart, and pardon your sin, and speak peace unto your soul, you would carefully avoid the like transgressions? That you would resist Satan's temptations, and be better in every relation, and fill up the duties that God requires at your hands? That you would pray more, and pray better? That you would take heed of after passion, if God would pardon your former passion? And yet you have come short of all this, not only through inavoidable infirmity, but through carelessness, and letting down your spiritual watch; when the temptation hath assaulted you again, you have quietly yielded again, and God hath not seen as much circumspection in your conversation as before, and do you think the next time you do receive, that God will not make you go away without the comfort of this ordinance, who deny to him the care of your conversation? If you would have God to do you good by this ordinance, you must walk so holily when any ordinance is over, that you may meet with God in another, or in the same at another time.

## CHAP. XV.

*Shewing how we may know whether we do good by coming to the Lord's table.*

**T**HAT you may know whether you receive benefit to your soul, by coming to the Lord's supper, you must be careful that you do not mistake. To prevent which, let me premise.

*First,* Take heed that you do not conclude you have no benefit at all, because you have not so much as you perceive some other Christians to have: for God's discoveries to his people are arbitrary and gradual, when he will, to whom he will, and in what measure he will.

*Secondly,* Take heed that you do not conclude, you have no benefit at all, if you have not so much as you hoped for, or expected. You aimed at much, and found but little, yet do not say, it was altogether an empty ordinance to your soul.

*Thirdly,* Take heed that you do not conclude you have no benefit at all, if you have it not in that particular and kind that you looked for: perhaps, you may aim at a great deal of comfort and joy when you went, and God may deny you that, and make you to sorrow, and be broken more for your sins; this is a spiritual benefit though not in the way that you look for it.

*Fourthly,* Take heed you do not conclude, the sacrament doth you no good at all, if you do not sensibly perceive it in the very act of receiving, while you are actually under this ordinance:



have no benefit by it then, is very sad and uncomfortable; but yet limit not the efficacy of the ordinance only to the time of receiving, but observe how it works with you after it is past: it may be sometimes you may mourn more, and rejoice more afterwards, than when you were at the table. Now to resolve your doubt, consider, you do get real benefit by the Lord's supper.

*First,* When you find your heart thereby more strongly engaged to inward and universal holiness. When you find your heart more obliged to walk with God, with more circumspection and care than you did before.

*Secondly,* When you find your faith is more increased: you can rely upon Christ more fiducially, than you could before: when you went, you did purpose to take Christ upon his own terms; but when you came away, your purpose is more settled, and you are more resolved in Christ's way, to venture the everlasting concernment of your soul upon him.

*Thirdly,* When you find your love to Christ thereby to be more inflamed: you loved him truly before, but now you love him strongly; your soul is sick, while he is absent, but when he is with you, you are satisfied; he now dwelleth more in your thoughts than before he did, a sign you love him more than before you did.

*Fourthly,* When communion with God in the sacrament is obtained, and God gives you the meeting, the ordinance then will certainly do you good, when you find your grace go forth in exercise towards God, and the Spirit of God bearing

upon your soul by the powerful influences thereof affecting of you.

*Fifthly*, When your spiritual delight and joy in God and Christ is more raised: before you did delight too much in the world, and in your friends, and in your riches, and less in Christ: but now more in Christ, and less in these: when you think of God, you can rejoice; when you speak of Christ, your soul triumpheth in him.

*Sixthly*, When your soul under the sight and sense of sin is more deeply humbled: if you have not joy in the sacrament, yet if you have more ingenious sorrow for your sin, God hath done you good thereby: if you do not come away with a rejoicing heart, yet if you come away with a weeping eye, proceeding from a truly contrite spirit, bless God for his mercy to you in that ordinance.

*Seventhly*, When corruption and sin is more abated, and become more loathsome to your soul: when the thoughts of sin are more loathsome to you, than the actings of it formerly were: when you groan more under the weight and load of sin, and do not set yourself more resolutely against it.

*Eighthly*, When your desires after full enjoyment of God and Christ in glory, are more enlarged. Here you feel the workings of his Spirit, that makes you long to behold his face in his glorious kingdom that the little taste you have of God's manifested love unto your souls, makes you almost impatient till God shall take you to himself.

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*Ninthly*, When your heart is more suspected; and you walk with a greater holy jealousy, and you do not lose the end of your going; and that you have an holy fear, that you break not covenant with God when his vows are upon you.

*Tenthly*, When you set a high valuation and esteem upon this ordinance, and prefer it before your necessary food; and find that your soul desires you may come again for this very end, that you might meet with more of God another time.

*Eleventhly*, When you are more strengthened and emboldened to undergo the loss of all things for Jesus sake: when you see how Christ hath suffered for you, even unto death, you now count not your very life too dear to lay down for Christ.

*Twelfthly*, When you come away truly thankful for what you had, and truly sorrowful you had no more: if you come away sorrowing, thinking you have not met with Christ, that very sorrow proves you did meet with Christ, else you had not sorrowed, when you think you missed him: by such things as these judge.

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C H A P. XVI.

*Shewing how we are to live after we have been at the Lord's supper.*

**I**F you find no benefit, then do these three things.

*First*, Examine what may be the cause, why

God withheld the benefit of the ordinance from you: why it was, it proved an empty duty unto you.

*Secondly*, Greatly bewail this before the Lord, that through your own miscarriage you should lose the great advantage that might have been received.

*Thirdly*, Labour to feel the benefit of the sacrament by repentance; and exercise faith upon Christ when the duty is over; and pray for the efficacy of it.

If you had good success, do likewise three things.

*First*, Give to God the glory of it; take you the comfort, give God the glory.

*Secondly*, The more good you get, the more frequent it: it is good to be often there, where you meet with God.

*Thirdly*, Let your conversation after the sacrament, witness the good that you receive in and by the sacrament: you say so, live so, that all may see it: an holy, suitable conversation, in living up to sacramental obligations, will convince yourself and others, that there is some real good that you do get by attending upon God therein.

But alas! how few do live as becometh those that have been at the table of the Lord? If you do but listen to their discourse, as soon as they are gone from this ordinance, you should hear some talking presently of the world, or of some thing impertinent to what they have been about. If you did but follow them from the Lord's table to their own, what unfavoury words should



from you hear from them? How frothy and vain in  
unto their discourse? And if you observe their actions,  
even upon the same day; and sometimes in the  
Lord, same hour that they have been eating and drink-  
should ing at the table of the Lord, you would perceive  
en re that they have presently forgot where they have  
been, and what they have been doing, and the  
f the obligations that there were laid upon them to live  
upon better. You should see one drunk with passion,  
r the and another filled with carnal mirth, another care-  
less in the after duty of the sabbath: trace them in  
three their lives in the week following, and you shall  
see them as worldly as vain, as negligent as others  
e you that never had been at such an ordinance.

Therefore that I might be instrumental (and  
more O! that I may) to stir you up to live as becomes  
e you those that frequents the Lord's table, I shall speak  
in these three things.

*First*, Why you should give all diligence in en-  
deavouring to live suitable to the obligations laid  
upon you at the table of the Lord.

*Secondly*, How you should live and walk after  
the sacrament, that your conversation might be  
suitable to your sacramental obligation.

*Thirdly*, What are the aggravations of this sin,  
in not living as becometh those that have been at  
the table of the Lord?

*First*, It requires your utmost diligence to en-  
deavour to live suitable to the sacrament, if you  
consider.

1. That your privileges are greater than the  
privileges of many others, whom God doth not  
invite nor call (while such) to come unto his ta-

bles: God honours you above the wicked in the world, above the ungodly and profane; and the greater your privileges and dignities is, the greater should your diligence be in living up to after duties, Mephibosheth esteemed it a great dignity and favour, that he should eat bread at king David's table, 2 Sam. ix. 7, 8. And is not a great dignity to eat of the bread of life, at the table of the King of heaven?

2. The devil will be assailing you with new temptations to draw you unto sin, after you have been at the table of the Lord. If God hath spoken peace unto your conscience, the devil will be endeavouring to break your peace: if you have got a pardon of your old sins, he will be tempting you again to the committing of new, and the greater discoveries you have had of God when you were there, the greater will his temptations be to draw you unto sin, when you come from thence. When Christ was baptized, and God had owned him by a voice from heaven, then he was tempted by the devil, Matth. iii. 17. and iv. 1. And if the devil be diligent to tempt you after such a duty, would you not be diligent to resist him? Or if you be not, is it not likely you will do something that will be unbecoming one that hath been at this ordinance? Let you yourself be judge.

3. You are to go again in the following week unto your worldly business and employments, and to trade in things below, and how soon will you lose the sense of God's love, and the sweet

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delight your soul was filled with, by dealing in the world, if you were not watchful?

4. Your own heart is apt to grow cold and dull again, after you have been warmed and heated in the sacrament: Therefore you must be diligent after such a duty. The water that is heated by the fire, still retains a principle that induceth it into his former coldness, when it is removed from the fire, and so doth your heart.

*Secondly,* If you would walk and live as becometh one that hath been at the table of the Lord; you must,

1. Endeavour to live and walk as Christ did, when he was here upon the earth. When you have been commemorating Christ's death, you must come away purposing to imitate his life. For as Christ in his sufferings hath left us an example how we ought to suffer, 1 Pet. ii. 21. So Christ in his life hath left us an example how we ought to live, John vi. 2. Then you will walk suitable to that ordinance, which is a commemoration of Christ's death, when you tread in his steps, while he lived upon the earth.

2. Walk and live as one that is redeemed by the blood of Christ should live. In the sacrament you have seen the greatness of the price that was paid for you, to redeem you from the torments of hell, from the wrath of God, the curse of the law, the power of sin: here it is, you see you are redeemed and bought, and therefore you are no longer your own, but his that died for you, 1 Cor. vi. 19.—“And ye are not your own. verse 20. For ye are bought with a

price; therefore glorify God in your body and in your spirit which are God's." Oh! how should a man redeemed from eternal torments walk and live?

3. Walk and live as one that hath been sealed up to the day of redemption should live. In the sacrament, you do not only see that you are redeemed, but also that you are sealed unto the day of redemption, you are assured of heaven and eternal life; and Oh, how should a person, that in the sacrament hath had the seal of the covenant of grace, assuring him of life and glory, walk and live!

4. Walk and live as one to whom the Lord hath spoken peace should live. In the Lord's supper, God hath told you. He is reconciled unto you, he hath said unto you, "My son, my daughter, be of good cheer, thy sins are forgiven thee;" Then go and live, as one pardoned by the Lord should live.

5. Walk and live as one that hath renewed his covenant with God should live. Be as strict against sin after the sacrament, as you did purpose when you was there. God hath avouched himself to be your God, and you have avouched yourself to be the Lord's, then live accordingly.

6. Walk and live as one that hath seen such sights at a sacrament as you have seen. Here you have seen the dreadful wrath of God against sin, the severity and the strictness of his justice against sin. Here you have seen the evil against sin, and the deserts thereof: Here you have seen

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what a precious thing the soul of man is, by the price that was paid for it: here you have seen the love of God and Christ to poor sinners: then live in that fear of sin, with that care of your immortal precious soul, as one that hath had such fights should do. But more particularly.

1. After you have been at the table of the Lord, you must make conscience of abstaining from those sins that there you did bewail, that there you sorrowed for: To weep or sin at the sacrament, and to indulge it when you go away, is great hypocrisy: will you (while there) seem to be grieved for your sin, and yet afterwards be unwilling to forsake it? Did you resolve against it, or did you not? If you did not, the Lord forgive you; your sin is great, and your love to sin was great, when you would not so much as purpose to leave your sin, nor resolve against it: No, not when you saw what Christ had suffered for sin: If you did, then do as you did purpose and resolve; especially, watch most against that sin, that you have ofteneft found prevailing against you, that your heart is almost ready to yield unto, and your conscience did most reproach you for, when you were at the table of the Lord, your endeavour must be against all sin, but chiefly, against your chiefest sin, Oh! never smile upon your sin, which you see hath put to death your Lord, the Prince of life.

2. After you have been at the sacrament, be conscious in discharging of either duties, which this ordinance doth engage you to. Yield obedience to the commands of God, which he hath

given you to be the rule of your life: This was your duty before, but now there is another bond to tie you to it, there is a superadded obligation laid upon you so to do; and your neglect and disobedience will be more heinous if you do not.

*First*, Be more frequent, and more fervent in your secret addresses unto God. Besides your worshipping of God in your family, (which sometimes come to the table of the Lord do shamefully neglect) be much with God alone. Oh! how should you love and delight to have communion with God in secret, when no eye doth see you but the eye of God, whom you have seen in the sacrament, hath given his son to you, and for you?

*Secondly*, Labour after growth in grace: This should have been in your desires before you went, and it should be your endeavour when you come from thence, to have more love for God than you had before, to have more delight in God and Christ, and more ardent desires than you had before.

*Thirdly*, Be more resolved to suffer, and to die for Christ than you were before. At the Lord's table, you have seen what Christ has done and suffered for you; be you therefore more resolved not only to do, but to suffer also for his sake: Be not only more eminent in your active but more patient in your passive-obedience than before.

*Fourthly*, Live in love with all that are partakers of the same benefit with you. Yea, in this ordinance, you have an example of loving

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your very enemies, as Christ did when he died for you: but a more special and particular love, you are taught to have to all the members of Christ's mystical body, when you see in this ordinance, how Christ hath loved them all, Eph. v. 2.

“Walk in love, as Christ also hath loved us, and hath given himself for us, an offering and a sacrifice to God, for a sweet smelling favour.”

*Fifthly*, Be not so afraid to die, after you have seen the death of Christ in the sacrament represented to you. Christ hath conquered this enemy, he hath made death your friend to open the door to you, that you may go in and live with him, who hath died for you.

*Thirdly*, If you do not live as becomes one that hath been at the table of the Lord, consider the greatness of your sin in these aggravations of it. If you live a loose and carnal life after you have partaken of this ordinance:

1. You break covenant with God, and those promises which you made to him of better obedience; you did again resign yourself to be the Lord's, if you did not, that was your sin; if you did, and do not answer it in your life, this is your sin.

2. You dishonour Christ, if you live not suitable to this ordinance; you profess yourself to be one of his disciples, else what did you there? If you be, and do not live accordingly, you dishonour him, whom you there had seen so much vilified and reproached by others for you, and yet shall be reproached by others by reason of you?

3. You do grieve the Spirit of God, if you live

not holily after the sacrament: did not the Spirit of God come and bear you witness, that you were a son of God's, and did secretly and powerfully persuade your heart, that God through the death of his Son was reconciled to you, and that your sins were pardoned, and that your soul should be saved when you die? And must not this be but a grief unto him, to see you walk so unworthily of his love?

4. You discredit your profession, and cause the holy ways of God to be evil spoken of, if you lead not a holy-life after you have been at the table of the Lord. Those that will not be holy themselves, will blame you, and reproach your profession, if you be not holy. Such a man goes to the sacrament, and yet will be unjust, and yet is vain in his discourse, and we see but little difference betwixt his life and ours; and so will be hardened in their evil ways, and be prejudiced against religion, by the unsuitable conversations of those that do profess it.

5. Falling into sin, which you have purposed and resolved against at the Lord's supper, will more deeply wound your conscience, and disturb your peace; when your conscience shall tell you you resolved against this sin, and yet you have committed it; you promised to be more watchful against the occasions and appearances of this evil but you have wilfully run into the committing of it or when tempted to it, you willingly consented.

6. Unsuitable walking after you have been at the Lord's table, will cause you to lose much of your holy confidence when you go again.

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will much hinder your application of Christ unto yourself, that you cannot with that holy confidence say, this Christ did die for me; especially if you be not deeply humbled for your falling before you come again.

7. Unsuitable walking after this ordinance, will provoke the Lord to withdraw from you, and leave you in a deserted state, to leave you in the dulness and the deadness of your heart; to take away his comforts from your heart, and to conceal his love from your soul, till you learn to walk more worthy of it.

8. Unsuitable walking after this ordinance, will be great unthankfulness unto God, for the giving of his Son, and all the privileges you have been partakers of by him. It is not your praising God with your lips, but chiefly, with your lives; not only in your words, but principally in your works, that will prove you truly thankful unto God. All that God requires from you, for all the blessings purchased by the death of Christ, and made over to you in the sacrament, is that you should be thankful unto him, and improve them to his praise and glory: but you cannot have a thankful heart, if you have not a suitable conversation.

These are some of those evils and aggravations of your sin in this respect, which you should be careful to prevent; that in nothing you may provoke your God to anger and displeasure, but behave yourself before, and in, and after your participation of this holy ordinance, that God may delight in you through Christ, and might wel-

come you to his table here, and to his kingdom when you leave this world; where you shall be filled with those delights and joys, of which you have a taste in this imperfect state at the table of the Lord.

## DIALOGUE.

*A short Dialogue between a Minister and a private Christian, that desires to partake of the Lord's supper.*

*Christian,*

**S**IR, If it will not be an interruption to you in your work, I desire your advice and counsel about a duty that concerns my soul.

*Minister,* It is the work which God hath committed to my charge, to further souls in their way to heaven, and direct them in their duty in order thereunto; therefore if your business with me be such, tell me what it is you do desire?

*C.* My earnest desire is, to partake of the sacrament of the Lord's supper.

*M.* Did you never yet receive this sacrament?

*C.* No.

*M.* Why have you lived so long in the neglect of this ordinance?

*C.* Because I have been full of doubts and fears concerning my fitness for it.

*M.* Have you then got your doubts resolved? And are you persuaded, that you are an invited guest unto this holy supper?

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C. Sometimes I have some hopes that God doth call me to it, but sometimes I fear that I am not prepared for it, and therefore I beg your direction what I ought to do.

M. You know that a minister cannot look into your heart, nor infallibly discern whether you have grace or not, should you not then rather search and examine yourself, since you may know the state of your own soul, which another cannot?

C. I know that no man can know my heart, and whether I be fit before God; but you may take account of my knowledge in order to it; and if I speak the truth, and do not lie, (which in the presence of God, at whose tribunal I must shortly stand, I promise) while I declare to you the working of the Spirit of God upon my heart, you may tell me from the word of God, what my condition is; neither do I come to spare my pains in examining of myself, but that hereby I might be the better enabled for it.

M. Are you willing then that I should try your knowledge concerning the Lord's supper, and inquire into the grounds and reasons of your hopes, why you think you are fitted for this duty?

C. I ought always to be ready to give an answer to every man that asketh me a reason of the hope that is in me, much more to such whom God hath set to watch for my soul, and especially when I design to partake of the Lord's supper.

M. Tell me then, what is the Lord's supper?

C. The Lord's supper is the second sacrament of the New Testament, 1 Cor. xi. 25. Instituted by Christ, Luke xxii. 19, 20. Wherein by the

signs of bread and wine, and the actions that concern the same, Matth. xxvi. 26, 27. We shew forth his death, 1 Cor. xi. 26. And God signifieth, sealeth and exhibiteth the body and blood of Christ, 1 Cor. xi. 26. with all the benefits of his death and passion, to every worthy receiver, for his spiritual nourishment and growth in grace.

M. Why is it called the Lord's supper.

C. Not because it is appointed a supper to us, but because Christ sitting at his last supper, ordained it in stead of the passover, Matth. xxvi. 26.

M. How long is the Lord's supper to continue in the church?

C. Till Christ's coming in glory, 1 Cor. xi. 26.

M. Is it the duty of believers to receive the Lord's supper?

C. Yes: Else, 1. They disobey Christ's command, Luke xxii. 19. 2. Slight Christ's love in appointing it for them. 3. Neglect a profitable means for their growth in grace. And 4. Provoke God to a great displeasure, Matth. xxii. 2, to ver. 9.

M. Is it the duty of believers often to partake of the Lord's supper?

C. 1. Christ's command, 1 Cor. xi. 26. 2. The apostles practice, Acts ii. 42. and xx. 7. 3. Their own necessity being often dull, John xx. 9. and often doubting, Matth. xxviii. 17. and often backward to believe, Luke xxiv. 25. or to remember Christ's doctrine about his death, Luke xxiv. 5, 6, 7, 8. Their often spiritual wants, Phil. iv. 19. Their too often decays in grace, Rev. ii. 4. and iii. 2. Their often sinning against God, James iii.

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2. And often need of cleansing by the blood of Christ, John xiii. 8. 1 John i. 7. And often need of pardon, Matth. vi. 12. Do require that believers should often partake of the Lord's supper.

M. Do hypocrites and unbelievers eat and drink Christ's body and blood?

C. No: Such receive only the outward elements.

M. Is not then their case dangerous?

C. Yes: Because, 1. Their sin is great, being guilty of Christ's body and blood, 1-Cor. xi. 27.

2. They eat damnation to themselves, verse 29.

3. Are sickly, and do die for this sin, verse 30. For this God casts some men's bodies to the grave and their souls to hell.

M. What course then must you take to prevent this sin and danger?

C. I must give all serious diligence to prepare my heart for so great a work.

M. Why do you think preparation is so needful?

C. Because, 1. All men are naturally unfit. 2. After conversion, believers are often indisposed for it. 3. God will come and view his guests, Matth. xxii. 11. 4. We have to do with the blood of the Son of God. 5. Many duties here do meet. And 6. God hath made great preparation for us.

M. How must you prepare yourself for the Lord's supper?

C. By a serious narrow search of my heart, whether I have those graces which God requires in worthy receivers: And by fervent solemn prayer.

M. What are these graces which God requires in your worthy receiving?

C. Knowledge, faith, love to God, repentance, and new obedience.

M. Why is knowledge necessary?

C. Because without knowledge the heart cannot be good, Prov. xvi. 2. Nor can a man examine himself nor discern the Lord's body.

M. What knowledge is necessary?

C. It is necessary to know how we were created, how we fell from God, and how we are recovered.

M. How were we created?

C. After the image of God, Gen. i. 27. in knowledge, righteousness, and holiness, Col. iii. 10. Eph. iv. 24.

M. How came we then to be so sinful and miserable?

C. By the first transgression of our first parents, Rom. v. 12, 18.

M. Wherein consists the sinfulness of our estate, by reason of our first parents fall?

C. In the imputation of Adam's first sin, Rom. v. 19. The privation of the image of God which we had at the first, Rom. iii. 10. And in the propensity of our hearts to the vilest sin, Gen. viii. 21. and vii. 5.

M. Can you declare more particularly the sinfulness of the several faculties of the soul, and members of the body?

C. The understanding is dark and ignorant, 1 Cor. iii. 14. Eph. iv. 17. An enemy to God, Rom. viii. 7. Vain, Eph. iv. 17. The will is stubborn and rebellious, John v. 40. Matth. xxiii. 27. Unable to chuse good, Phil. ii. 13. The conscience is defiled, Tit. i. 15. In some seared,

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1 Tim. iv. 2. Erroneous, John ii. 16. Doubting, Rom. xiv. 23. The heart is as hard as an adamant, Zech. vii. 11, 12. The affections turned from the best objects; the liking affections which should be placed upon God, are towards evil: naturally men love pleasures more than God, 2 Tim. iii. 4. And riches, Matth. xix. 21, 22. And themselves, Matth. xvi. 24. And their relations, Matth. x. 37. And desire any thing rather than God and Christ, Isa. xxxii. 2. John xxi. 14. And delight in evil, not in good, Prov. ii. 14. Their disliking affections which should be against sin, are against God: haters of God, Rom. i. 10. Grieving at God's goodness to others, Matth. xx. 11, to 16. The memory apt to forget good, Heb. xii. 5. Deut. viii. 10, 11, 14. To remember evil, Ezek. xxiii. 19, 21. And when it remembers good, it is for a wrong end, Matth. xxvii. 63. So all the members of the body are instruments of sin, Rom. vi. 19. Eyes are full of adultery, 2 Pet. ii. 14. Feet swift to sin, throat, tongue, lips, mouth, full of sin, Rom. iii. 13, 14, 15.

M. Wherein will the knowledge of this sinfulness of man be useful unto you, when you go to the Lord's table?

C. It will be an help to break my heart when I am there, that I should be such a bundle and lump of sin; to feel a need of Christ, and to admire the love of God in sending his Son to die for such a filthy, loathsome, and polluted wretch.

M. What is the misery of that estate into which man fell?

C. The punishments that are due to man for

sin, are, 1. All temporal miseries, as God's curse upon the creatures, Gen. iii. 17. Rom. viii. 20. Upon his estate, Deut. xxii. 17. Children, verse 18. And all he takes in hand, verse 20. Sicknesses; as plague, verse 21. Consumption, fever, agues, &c. verse 22, 27. Lev. xxvi. 19. Famine, Deut. xxviii. 22, 23, 24. Madness, verse 28. Death, Rom. vi. 23. Gen. ii. 17. and iii. 10. Yea, all the curses that are written in the book of God, Deut. xxix. 20, 27. And that are not written, Deut. xxviii. 61. 2. Spiritual miseries; by nature man is dead in sin, Eph. ii. 1. A child of wrath, Eph. ii. 3. And of the devil, John viii. 44. Loathsome to God, Ezek. xvi. 5. A stranger to him, Eph. ii. 19. Under blindness of mind, Isa. vi. 9. In danger of hell but doth not see it, Rom. xi. 8. Nor fear it, Deut. xxix. 19. Insensible of sin, Isa. xlvi. 4. But sometimes filled with such horror of conscience, that he is weary of his life, Gen. iv. 13, 14. And will die by his own hands, rather than bear it, Matth. xxvii. 3, 4, 5. Hath a reprobate mind, Rom. i. 28. And vile affections, Rom. i. 26. Is under the power of the devil, Eph. ii. 2. And of lusts, verse 3. And is prone to unnatural wickedness, Gen. xix. 5. Indeed this is his misery, that God is angry with him every day, Psal. vii. 11. And that nothing he can do, doth please God, Rom. viii. 8. 3. Eternal miseries; as banishment from the comfortable presence of God for ever, Matth. xxiii. 2. 2 Thes. i. 9. The pains of hell, Rev. xx. 15. In a lake of fire and brimstone, Rev. xxi. 8. That shall never be quenched, Mark ix. 44. With the company

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of cursed, tormented, and tormenting devils, Mat. xxv. 41. Where the worm shall never die, Mark ix. 46. And the torment shall be easeless, Luke xvi. 24, 25. Remediless, verse 26. endless, Rev. xiv. 10, 11.

M. Wherein will the knowledge of this promote your fitness for the Lord's supper?

C. It will make me the more importunately to cry for mercy, Luke xviii. 13. To see my need of Christ, Matth. ix. 12. To hasten to him, and believe on him, Acts xvi. 29, to 33. To value Christ above all, Phil. iii. 7, 8. To confess my sins, Luke xv. 18. And to grieve for them Acts ii. 7.

M. By whom are you recovered from this sin and misery?

C. By Jesus Christ alone, Acts iv. 12.

M. Who was Christ?

C. The eternal Son of God, Psal. ii. 7. Who became man, John i. 14. Who was, and is God, John i. 1. And man, 1 Tim. ii. 5. In two distinct natures, Matth. xxii. 41, to 46, and Rom. i. 3, 4. And one person for ever, John iii. 13.

M. Why was it necessary that the Mediator between God and man, should be both God and man?

C. If he had not been man, he could not have died, 1 Tim. vi. 16. And if he had not been God, his death had not been satisfactory for our sins, nor have purchased his church, Acts xx. 23.

M. How doth Christ redeem us from every sin and misery?

C. By executing the office of a Prophet, Acts iii. 22. Priest, Heb. v. 6. And King, Psal. ii. 6.

M. Why was it necessary that Christ should execute this three-fold office?

C. To cure us of a three-fold misery that we lay under.

M. What was the first?

C. We were blind and ignorant, Matth. xxi. 14, and xxiii. 16, 17, 19, 24, 26. Therefore he became a Prophet, to reveal to us the will of God for our salvation, John i. 28.

M. What was the second?

C. We had sinned, and could not satisfy the justice of God, Micah vi. 6, 7. Therefore he became our Priest, by dying to satisfy God's justice, and to interceed for us, Isa. liii. 4, 5, 6.—Heb. vii. 25.

M. What was the third?

C. We were weak, Rom. v. 9. and could neither turn to God, Jer. xxxi. 18. and xvii. 14. Lam. v. 21. nor subdue our enemies, Mark v. 1, 14. Therefore he became our King, to subdue us to himself, Psal. cxix. 3. And to save us, Isa. xxxiii. 22. And to return and conquer his and our enemies, Psal. cx. 1. 1 Cor. xv. 24, 25, 27.

M. How are we made partakers of Christ and his benefits?

C. By faith, John iii. 16. Acts xiii. 39. Eph. ii. 8.

M. What is faith?

C. It is an hearty receiving of Christ for Lord and Saviour, John i. 12. Or a resting upon Christ alone for salvation.

M. Why do you say, that faith is necessary to worthy receiving?

C. Because, 1. Without faith it is impossible

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to please God, Heb. xi. 6. And we should not displease him at his table. 2. By faith we are the children of God, John i. 12. Gal. iii. 26. And this is children's bread, and God's household provision: and we are not of the household of God, till we are of the household of faith, Eph. ii. 19. Gal. ii. 10. 3. The Lord's supper doth not sanctify unbelievers, but unbelievers profane the Lord's supper, Hag. ii. 12, 13, 14. 4. Because of many scripture expressions, setting forth the usefulness of faith, it is the food of the soul, and at the Lord's supper we should come to Christ, John vi. 35. It is the mouth of the soul, John vi. 35. And there we should feed upon Christ; it is the hand of the soul to receive Christ, John i. 12. And we should take Christ when we take the bread; it is the eye of the soul, Isa. xiv. 22. And there we should behold our crucified Lord; it is the life of the soul, Gal. ii. 20. And a dead man cannot feed upon Christ.

M. Why did you say, that repentance is necessary to worthy receiving?

C. Because, 1. We are to judge ourselves, 1 Cor. xi. 31. A soft heart will receive the impression of this seal. 2. Because a man is to turn from sin, when he comes to the Lord's table.

M. Why did you say, that love to God is necessary?

C. Because it is uncomfortable to sit down at the table of an enemy, but dreadful and dangerous to sit down in our enmity at the table of the Lord: If a man keep up his fellowship with the

devil, he provoketh God, if he comes to his table,  
1 Cor. x. 21, 22.

M. Why do you say that new obedience is necessary?

C. Else a man will come in his rebellion, God preferreth obedience before sacrifice: else a man doth not receive out of obedience unto God, but for some sinister end. A disobedient liver cannot be a worthy receiver, nor have communion with God, 1 John i. 6, 7.

M. If these things be so necessary, doth it not concern you to examine whether they be wrought in your heart? C. Yes.

M. What are the signs of true faith?

C. 1. A prizing of Christ above all things in this world, 1 Pet. ii. 7. 2. Willingness to receive him into the heart upon gospel-terms, for Lord and Saviour, John i. 12. 3. If it purify the heart, Acts xv. 9. 4. If it be fruitful in good works, James ii. 17. 5. If it enable us to overcome the world, 1 John v. 2.

M. How do you love God?

C. Because, 1. I am grieved at his absence, and cannot be satisfied till I find him, Cant. iii. 1, 2, 3. 2. By my desires to be like him, and love to those that are like him, 1 John iv. 7. 12. 3. By my hatred unto sin, Psal. xcvi. 10. 4. By my obedience unto his command, Exod. xx. 6. John xiv. 22, 23. 5. By my desires to have and part with all for him, that he might have the predominancy of my love, Matth. x. 37. 6. By my grieving when he is dishonoured by myself, or others, Psal. li. 4. and cxix. 53, and 136, 158.

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**M.** How do you know you have repentance for sin?

**C.** Because, 1. My soul groans under it as a burthen heavier to me than my afflictions, Luke xvi. 16, 18, 19, 21. Matth. xi. 28. 2. Because I am ashamed of my secret sins before God, that never exposed me to shame amongst men, and loath myself for all, Ezek. vi. 31. 3. Because I desire for to forsake all sin, even the dearest, Prov. xxviii. 13. 4. Because what I cannot get freed from, I fight against, that sin might never have a peaceable possession in my heart, Gal. v. 17.

**M.** How do you know the truth of your new obedience?

**C.** Because, 1. My obedience springs from a new principle, love to, and fear of God, Deut. x. 12. 2. Is guided by a new rule, not by my own will, but the word of God, Gal. vi. 16. And 3. I aim at a new end, the glory of God, 1 Cor. x. 31.

**M.** But if a man cannot say, he loves God, and say, he hath faith, but yet find he hungers after Christ, and thirsteth for him, may he come to the Lord's table?

**C.** Yes, 1. Because assurance is not necessary, 2. Because weak believers have a right unto it. 3. Because God inviteth those that hunger and thirst, Isa. lv. 1. 1 John vii. 37. 4. Christ pronounceth them blessed. And 5. Promiseth that they shall be filled, Matth. v. 6.

**M.** But would it not tend much to your comfort at the Lord's table, to know before you go, that Christ died for you in particular?

**C.** Yes: Because then I might say, here is blood, and it was shed for me, &c.

**M.** How may you know that Christ died for you in particular?

**C.** 1. If I be one of his people, Matth. i. 21. And this I am, if I be willing to be, to do, to suffer what Christ would have me, Psal. x. 13. 2. If I be one of Christ's friends, doing his commands, John xv. 13, 14. 3. If I be dead to sin, Gal. vi. 14. 4. If I live to Christ, 2 Cor. v. 15. I may conclude, he died for me, Gal. ii. 26.

**M.** If upon serious search, you find these graces wrought in your heart, is it necessary, you should spend some time in solemn prayer before you go?

**C.** Yes: Because, 1. I cannot act what grace I have without God's assistance, Job xv. 5. 2. The duty is solemn and weighty. 3. Though God would give the blessings of the covenant of grace, yet he will be sought unto for them, Ezek. xxxvi. 37.

**M.** Is it sufficient for your worthy receiving, that you have found these graces in your heart and prayed to God before you go?

**C.** No: But I must see that my end be right, and that I behave myself as I ought while I am there.

**M.** What is your end in going to the Lord's table?

**C.** My end must be, 1. To have communion with God. 2. To increase my faith in Christ, and love to God. 3. To further my joy in the Holy Ghost. 4. My peace of conscience. And 5. Hope of eternal life. 6. To renew my covenant with God. 7. To quicken me to obedience. 8. To make me thankful to God for his mercy bestowed upon me in Christ. 9. To get power a-

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gainst my sins. And 10. Especially to remember and shew forth the death of Christ.

M. What remembrance must this be of the death of Christ?

C. Not an historical remembrance of Christ's death only, for so the devil's remember that Christ died; but such a remembrance that should affect my heart with love to him, desire after him, joy in him, with sorrow for my sin, that caused his death, and whereby I might answer all the charges of the law, the clamours of my conscience, and the accusations of the devil, Rom. viii. 33, 34.

M. Having found the truth of grace in your heart, and that your end is right, what must you do when you are there?

C. Give all diligence in endeavouring to draw my graces into act.

M. What are those graces that you must endeavour to exercise when you are at the table of the Lord?

C. Faith, love to God and Christ, sorrow for sin, desires after Christ, and thankfulness.

M. What means will you use when you are there to exercise these graces?

C. Sometimes I would meditate upon such things as are here offered to my thoughts from this ordinance, tending thereunto; and sometimes put up ejaculations unto God, that he would please to help me.

M. What would you meditate upon at the Lord's table for this end?

C. 1. Sometimes I would think upon the love of God and Christ. 2. Sometimes upon his wrath

and severity against sin. 3. The heinous nature of sin. 4. The preciousness of my soul. 5. The sufferings of my Lord. 6. Of my sitting with God in his kingdom. And 7. The privileges I am made partaker of in this life, by the death of Christ.

M. What are those privileges purchased by the death of Christ, sealed in the sacrament, the believing thoughts whereof will tend to warm your heart, and act your graces at the sacrament?

C. These are, 1. Peace with God, Rom. v. 1. Col. i. 20, 21. 2. The righteousness of Christ imputed, 2 Cor. v. 21. 3. Pardon of sin, Eph. i. 7. 4. The death of sin, Rom. vi. 6. 5. Adoption, Eph. i. 5. Gal. iii. 26. 6. Perseverance, Philip. i. 5. 7. Deliverance from wrath to come, 1 Thess. i. 10. 8. Communion with God, 1 John i. 3. 9. Hope of heaven and eternal life, 1 Pet. i. 3, 4.

M. What is there in the sacrament presented to your senses, that represents these things to your faith?

C. Sacramental elements, and sacramental actions.

M. What are the sacramental elements?

C. Bread and wine, signifying Christ's body and blood, Matth. xxvi. 26, 27.

M. Is not the bread and wine changed into Christ's body and blood?

C. No surely: for then, 1. Christ's glorious body now would be subject to corruption. 2. Then a finite body can be in heaven and earth, and in many places upon the earth at the same time.



Then I do not know bread and wine, when I do  
eat it, and taste it. 4. Then there would be no signs  
of the things signified, and so this would be no sa-  
crament. 5. Then a drunkard might eat and drink  
Christ's body and blood, as well as a true believer.

Then the minister may as surely give the things  
signified, as the outward signs, whereas this is the  
privilege and prerogative of God alone, Luke iii. 16.

Then at the first institution there were two  
Christ's, one that gave and another that was given,

The cup is said to be the New Testament, as  
well as it is said to be Christ's blood, 1 Cor. xi. 25.

But in that there must be a figure, whether Papists  
will or no, and so there is in this.

M. Why then are the outward signs graced  
with the names of the things signified?

C. 1. To shew the inseparable conjunction of the  
things signified, with the outward signs, to the  
worthy receivers. 2. Because of the fit propor-  
tion and agreement between the signs, and the  
things signified.

M. Wherein is the agreement betwixt the out-  
ward signs, and the things signified?

C. In regard, 1. Of the preparation; the bread  
must be prepared, and the corn must be threshed  
on the floor, grinded in the mill, baken in the  
oven: and that wine might be prepared, the grapes  
must be crushed in the wine-press. So that Christ  
might be a Saviour unto sinners he must be bruised  
for our sins, and scorched in the oven of his Fa-  
ther's wrath, and alone must tread the wine-press,  
Isa. lxiii. 3. 2. In regard of usefulness, bread is  
of daily use, whatsoever be our other refreshments,

so Christ is of daily use unto us, whatsoever be our other enjoyments: bread is the staff of life, and wine cheereth the heart of man: such is Christ unto our souls.

M. What may you meditate upon when you see that Christ ordained both bread and wine to be the signs in this sacrament?

C. The plentiful redemption we have in Christ: that from him we might have supply for all our wants, complete nourishment; here being bread that satisfies our hunger, and wine that quenches our thirst.

M. What may you meditate upon when you see the bread and wine given apart?

C. That Christ's blood was separated from his body, that we might not be separated from God for ever.

M. Doth the cup belong also to the people, as well as to the minister?

C. Yes: for as much as Christ in the first institution, Matth. xxvi. 17. And the apostle afterwards, 1 Cor. xi. 25, 26, says, "drink ye all of this." The same that are commanded to eat are also commanded to drink, without difference: and this sacrament is the communion of Christ's blood, as well as his body, 1 Cor. x. 16.

M. What be the sacramental actions?

C. The actions, some are of the minister, some of the receivers.

M. What are the actions of the minister?

C. They are four.

M. Which is the first?

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ands, and to separate them from ordinary bread and wine.

M. What may you meditate upon when you see the minister do this?

C. That God in his eternal purpose and decree, hath separated Christ from all other men to be our mediator, Exod. xii. 5. Heb. vii. 26.

M. Which is the second action of the minister?

C. He is to bless and consecrate the bread and wine by the word and prayer.

M. What may you meditate upon as signified by this?

C. That God in the fulness of time sent his Son into the world, furnishing him with all gifts needful for a mediator, Gal. iv. 4.

M. What is the third action of the minister?

C. To break the bread, and pour out the wine.

M. What may you meditate upon when you see him do this?

C. The passions and sufferings of Christ, and that he endured both in body and soul for our sins, his blessed body being bruised, and his precious blood shed, and that his soul was poured out unto death, Isa. liii. 5, 10, 12. Heb. ix. 14.

M. What is the fourth action of the minister?

C. To give and to distribute the bread and wine unto the receivers.

M. What may you meditate upon when you see him do this?

C. That God is giving his Son, and the Son giving himself, and really though invisibly dealing forth to every worthy receiver the benefit of his death, according as he needs.

M. What be the sacramental actions of the receivers?

C. Two.

M. Which is the first action of the receiver?

C. To take the bread and wine offered by the minister.

M. What may you meditate upon and do then?

C. I ought to stretch forth the hand of faith and receive Christ and all his benefits, else I play the hypocrite at the Lord's table, before God and the whole congregation.

M. Which is the second action of the receiver?

C. To eat the bread and drink the wine.

M. What doth that signify?

C. Union unto Christ, and enjoyment of him, my feeding upon Christ by faith, for the strengthening of the graces of God's Spirit in my soul.

M. What must you do after the sacrament is over?

C. Consider with myself, if I have received any benefit thereby.

M. How will you know this?

C. 1. By the increase of my faith in Christ and love to God. 2. By my greater hatred unto sin, and power against it. 3. By my longing after the enjoyment of God in heaven. 4. By my prizing of this ordinance above my necessary food. And 5. By my resolutions in the strength of Christ, to suffer for him who died for me.

M. What must you do if you have found good in this ordinance?

C. I must give God the glory, desire to come again, and walk suitably in my conversation.

M. How suitably?

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M. How must you live that you may walk suitably?

C. I must make it my business to forsake all sin; and to perform all the duties that God requireth from me.

M. What if you do not?

C. I then, 1. Dishonour Christ. 2. Grieve the Spirit. 3. Break my covenant made and renewed with God. 4. Discredit my profession. 5. Wound my conscience. 6. Provoke God to withdraw from me. 7. I shall be guilty of great unthankfulness. And 8. Weaken my conscience when I go again.

M. What if you find no good by the sacrament?

C. I must examine what was the cause, and be humbled for it, and forsake the sin, and pray to feel the benefit of it when I am come away, and better prepare myself, and humbly wait upon God therein another time.

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*Dialogue between a weak Believer that dares not come to, and a strong Believer that dares not absent himself from the Lord's supper.*

*Weak Believer.*

MY Friend, I am glad I met with you on such a day as this.

*Strong Believer.* I rejoice in your health, and in the mercy vouchsafed to us both, that we have the Lord's day more to wait upon our God.

W. I may account it mercy indeed, who have been so dull and dead, and out of frame all the

week long, and yet uncertain what the state of my soul is: but I pray you, where are you going so chearfully?

S. I am going to a feast this day.

W. Do you spend holy time in feasting?

S. Yes, in such feasting as I am going to.

W. What feast do you mean?

S. A feast of fat things, a feast of wines on the lees, fat things full of marrow, of wines on the lees, well refined.

W. Who invites you to this feast, of which you speak such great things as these?

S. God himself doth make this feast, and invites me to it; our Father makes a banquet for his children.

W. If God do call you to a feast, the provisions surely are according to the state of so great a King?

S. Wisdom hath killed her beasts, she hath mingled her wine, she hath furnished her table: the oxen and fatlings are killed, and all things are ready: there is milk for the weak, and wine for the strong, and sorrowful of heart. There is bread for the hungry, water for the thirsty, every thing that is necessary, or delightful. Indeed it is the body and blood of Christ, who is both the matter and the master of this feast.

W. Now I understand you mean the Lord's supper: and I have heard indeed of some that have partaken thereof, that great and precious things are there prepared?

S. Yes, there are; and me-thinks I feel my heart to burn within me, while I am speaking of

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them, and the love of him that hath prepared them, and called me unto them.

W. Surely you will be much delighted when you are there, since your heart is thus raised as you are going to it?

S. Raised through the mercy of my God, at this time it is, but sometimes it is not so; but I am without a sense and feeling of the love of God, yet then I would not dare to absent myself from this holy supper; for when I am without the sense of the love of God, I then endeavour to keep upon my heart, a sense of my duty towards him, and of my wants, to fetch supplies from him by this and other means, as he hath appointed in his word.

W. Then if you have the light of God's countenance or not, you are desirous to be partaking of the supper of the Lord?

S. Though I have no comfort, I would do my duty; yea then my soul doth long, doth thirst, and exceedingly desire, that (through the mercy of my God, and merits of my Saviour) I may taste of these provisions, and feed upon my Lord Redeemer, whose flesh is meat indeed, and whose blood is drink indeed.

W. But I pray you what are these provisions that are thus prepared, that do thus affect your heart?

S. What are they? They are rich and costly provisions; they are free, suitable, plentiful, sufficient, self-nourishing, lasting, heart cherishing provisions.

W. Will you not particularize some of these provisions for my better information?

S. Oh! my soul rejoiceth within me.

W. Lord, how dull am I while he is thus affected?

S. My soul rejoiceth within me, while I consider what they be.

W. What are they?

S. What! Christ and all his privileges are ready to be exhibited, and sealed to my soul this day.

W. What privileges?

S. Peace with God, pardon of sin, righteousness imputed, peace of conscience, joy in the Holy Ghost, more grace and perseverance to the end, and at the end eternal life.

W. Shew me the suitableness of these provisions to your soul?

S. A Saviour is suitable to a lost sinner; pardon to a guilty sinner; peace with God to a sinner that was an enemy to God; peace of conscience to a sinner under apprehensions of God's wrath; justification to a condemned sinner; cleansing blood to a polluted sinner; comfort to a dejected sinner. These, these are the provisions which are set upon my Father's table.

W. These are great and excellent things indeed, but who are Christ's guests invited to this feast? Who are these provisions for?

S. For those that are burdened with sin, and forsake it; for those that hunger and thirst after righteousness; for the children of God; for the friends and followers of Christ; for those that are willing to take him in all his offices.



W. But might the poor, and those that have no money go unto this feast?

S. Yes, yes, the poor in purse might be welcome, and the poor in spirit shall be welcome: God loves to see his table filled with those that are sensible of their wants and sins, and those he will satisfy abundantly with the fulness of his house, and cause to drink of the rivers of his pleasures, when the full self-righteous Pharisee shall be sent empty away.

W. This revives my heart, if you can make it good?

S. The mouth of the Lord hath spoken it, and therefore you may not doubt thereof. He is most earnest with the hungry and thirsty to come, Isa.

lv. 1. "Ho, every one that thirsteth, come ye to the waters, and he that hath no money: come, come ye, buy and eat; yea, come, buy wine, and milk without money, and without price." And

the Son calleth such, John vii. 37. "In the last day, that great day of the feast, Jesus stood and cried, saying, If any man thirst, let him come unto me and drink." And the Spirit calleth such,

Rev. xxii. 17. "And the Spirit and the Bride say, come; and let him that heareth, say, Come; and let him that is athirst, come; and whosoever will, let him drink of the water of life freely."

And the ministers of God are still sent to call such, Luke xiv. 21.—"The master of the house

said to his servant, Go out quickly into the streets and lanes of the city, and bring in hither the poor, and the maimed, and the halt, and the blind," verse 23. "And the Lord said

unto his servant, Go out into the high-ways,

(where poor men are wont to beg) and hedges, (where poor men are wont to work) and compel them to come in, that my house may be filled."

W. And do these scriptures encourage you to frequent this ordinance?

S. Yes, and because the same God that commandeth me to pray, commandeth me to receive, and hath given me hopes, that I shall be partaker of the benefits thereof, I am bound to wait upon the Lord therein.

W. What do you hope to be partaker of by going to this ordinance?

S. I hope to have my heart inflamed with love to God and desires after Christ, to have my Saviour more endeared to my soul, my heart softened, my sins subdued, my faith strengthened, my evidences cleared, and my soul assured of eternal life.

W. What reason have you to hope you shall have these advantages by going to the Lord's supper?

S. Not for any worth in me; but God is pleased for to give these things freely for the sake of Christ, to those that in obedience to his command, in a right manner, and for a right end, do make conscience of this duty.

W. What course have you taken before-hand, that you have such hopes of such benefits by this ordinance?

S. I do not want to declare what my secret duties are, but if it might be for the edifying of your soul, I shall not be unwilling to acquaint you.

W. I pray you do, for I stand in need of help from others more experienced in holy duties?

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S. I cannot say I am more experienced, but this I did, I seriously searched my heart to find the truth of grace, my interest in Christ, my right unto this ordinance, to find out my sins, and have renewed my repentance for them, my wants, and have begged of God, as earnestly as I could, that I might be supplied at his table, and for his strength to discharge this duty to his glory and my own comfort.

W. O happy man! that hath these provisions prepared for you, and can go with this delight, and holy confidence to partake of them?

S. You also may draw near unto this table of the Lord, and have a share of these gospel benefits, and be assured of them.

W. I! alas! alas! you know not what I am, what I have been; I never did, I do not dare to meddle with the blood of Christ in this ordinance?

S. You may come and eat of this bread and drink of this cup.

W. What! I, shall a dog eat of the children's bread? I dare not do it?

S. You must, you sin if you neglect it.

W. Sin, that I would not, that is it that maketh me absent from it, because I would not sin against the blood of Christ; but why dare you say, I sin if I do not come?

S. Because you live in the neglect of a plain commanded duty: it is a slighting of a special token of the love of your dying Lord.

W. Why my dying Lord?

S. It is a neglecting of the seal of the covenant of grace: it is hypocrisy to complain of the hard-

ness of your heart, and will not use the means to have it softened; and of the power of your sin, and will not use the means to have it weakened.

W. I never knew any under my doubts and fears that went to this ordinance, and found good thereby?

S. Not so, for I myself was long under the same doubts and fears, and I know my heart was as bad as yours can be; but when I was willing to forsake my sin, and close with Christ, sense of duty, fear of sin, if I did not, moved me to the use thereof, and there God resolved my doubts and removed my fears, and made it profitable to my soul, for my comfort and increase of grace.

W. But it would be sin to me to go, for that which is a duty, and would be food unto another, might be a sin and poison unto me, because I am not fit for such an ordinance?

S. If you be not fit, that also is your sin.

W. Then my case is miserable indeed. If I do not come, I sin; and if I be unfit, and come, I sin. Ah Lord! am I in this necessity of sinning? Oh tell me then, what I must do?

S. You must not abide in that condition, wherein you are unfit for the supper of the Lord, but fit yourself and come.

W. Alas! who will pity my pining soul, that hath food before it, and yet unworthy to meddle with it?

S. A legal worthiness you cannot have, neither doth God expect it at your hands; but an evangelical worthiness you may have.

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ference to this ordinance. I pray you tell me, when is a person said to be worthy in a gospel sense?

S. When he is clothed with the righteousness of Christ, hath grace infused into his soul, and doth act it at the Lord's supper; he doth worthily receive.

W. Then I perceive that man might be a sinner, and yet a worthy receiver?

S. Yes.

W. What, a great sinner too?

S. Yes, he may.

W. This is some support to my fainting soul: but yet my soul is cast down within me, for I doubt, I am not one of those sinners that you do mean?

S. It grieves me to see you in this distress of spirit, I am persuaded, that if you would go unto this ordinance, you would in time hear God speaking peace and comfort to your soul.

W. My desires and my fears are such, I know not which exceeds. Fain I would, but I dare not. It is grief unto my soul, when I see the children of God approach unto their Father's table, and I absent myself, as though not of his family; but I am such a sinner, that I dare not go?

S. Why, what a sinner are you?

W. I am the chief of sinners, should I therefore go?

S. So was St. Paul in his own esteem, yet such Christ came to save, 1 Tim. i. 10. God's mercy and promise; Christ's merits are as great, yea, greater than your sins, Psal. ciii. 12. Matth. xii.

31. You have not been a greater sinner than Adam, or Manassah, 2 Chron. xxiii. 1. to the 14. Or Mary Magdalene, Luke vii. 37, 39. Or at least you have not committed more sins than all these: if you have, yet you have not committed more sins than all the elect of God in all the ages of the world amount unto: and hath, and will God pardon these? And are your sins yet too great for pardoning mercy?

W. O wonderful! I see it is not the greatness or the number of sinners abominations that shall keep mercy from them; but these had their hearts of stone turned into hearts of flesh, but my heart is hard, and like an adamant, and it should be a broken heart, that should not behold a broken Christ in the sacrament. But this I want.

S. Sense of hardness of heart, is some degree of softness of heart, Isa. lxiii. 17. Pharaoh complained of his judgments; not of the hardness of his heart. You are sensible, and do grieve for the hardness of your heart, or do you not? If you do not, why then do you complain? If you do, your hardness is not the hardness that there is in reprobrates: but such as may be, and is in the people of God: And this sacrament is a means to have it softened.

W. This doth a little help me, I pray you proceed to discover what things do difference hardness in a child of God, from the hardness that is in a wicked man?

S. Sense of sin, and of God's dishonour, a judging of yourself for sin, unfeigned turning from sin, earnest prayers for softning grace, a rolling of

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yourself upon Christ, tenderness of conscience, and holy fear of sinning against God, holy care to please him, teachableness of heart, in holy restlessness till you have Christ, do. distinguish your hardness of heart in a wicked man.

W. How else?

S. Your hardness is occasional, not constant; the hardness of a reprobate, is like the hardness of such stones, that are harder by the heat of the sun; but your hardness, is like the hardness of ice, that when the sun doth shine upon it, it is melted and dissolved.

W. But if I had a heart of flesh, I do not think there would be so much hardness remaining in me more than others?

S. God cures the hardness of his peoples hearts in their conversion, effectually; in sanctification, gradually; and a their dissolution, perfectly; but not till then.

W. This proves my hardness to be more than the hardness of God's people, because I mourn not for my sin as they do, nor can I be so deeply humbled for it, and what should I do at the sacrament, if I cannot mourn for sin?

S. Imitate those that mourn for sin; but you conclude not right, that you mourn not truly, nor at all, because you mourn not gradually, or as much as others do. The word of God, and not the attainments of others, must be the rule by which you ought to judge of the truth of your mourning for sin. Besides, if you do not mourn directly, you mourn reflectively, you mourn that you cannot mourn, and you pray that you may

mourn. Besides, it is not your tears that can justify you in the sight of God: for if you could mourn more than any, yet you must be justified freely by the blood of Christ, and so you will when you mourn truly, though less than some others do.

W. If it be so, then tell me when my mourning for sin is right, and the mourning of a true penitent?

S. When you mourn for sin as sin; for all sin because it is against God, Psal. v. 4. As an evil greater than any affliction, Rom. vii. 4. Paul never cried out for the evil of affliction, as he did for the evil of sin: when you rejoice in the law of God, that doth discover it; and bless God he ever wrote it, and that you ever knew it, Rom. vii. 12. When your mourning for sin makes you loath it, and leave Christ, and hasten to him, to close with him.

W. This I fear my mourning for my sin ariseth from the fear of hell?

S. You may quicken your heart to mourn for sin, from the torments of hell, that it hath deserved; but that this is not the principal ground of your mourning appears, because you can mourn and grieve for other men's sins, as well as your own: and when you have no thoughts of hell, and when you have the greatest persuasions of God's mercy to you, in saving you from wrath to come, you mourn most: and then you mourn for the power and filth of sin, as for your misery thereby, and are willing to accept of Christ for your Lord, as well as for your Saviour.

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W. I do not deny it to be thus with me, that I am willing to accept of Christ upon any terms. Lord, a Christ upon any terms. But I fear Christ is not willing to give himself, nor God willing to give his Son to such an one as I: and what should I do at the sacrament, if Christ be not willing to give himself, and his benefits unto me?

S. This is the language of your unbelief.

W. I have enough of that?

S. For is it possible you should be willing to receive Christ, if Christ were not willing to give himself to you?

W. Indeed.

S. For you could not be willing, if Christ had not first been willing: and it is the intolerable pride of your heart, to think you can be more willing to be, and receive good, than God and Christ is to give, and make you good. Besides, then such one may come, and plead at the last day, Lord, I am not damned, because I was not willing to accept of Christ; but because thou wouldst not give Christ to me, when I was willing to receive him.

W. Truly I think there shall be no such plea at the day of judgment.

S. Then your condition is good if you be willing; for if you be willing to receive Christ, and God be willing to give him unto you, you have him, and yet will you not go to commemorate his death?

W. O Lord, what strange conviction is this? Surely I had Christ, and did not know it; I was happy, and did not perceive it. But alas! no sooner did I perceive a little light to shine into my

foul, but it was clouded; for my heart is deceitful and I may think I am willing, when I am not!

S. Then I do discern you will now suspect, that you yourself are not willing, rather than that God is not willing and so you have more reason to do: but though your heart be so deceitful, that you cannot understand all the particular sinful actions of your heart, yet by serious search, and prayer unto God, you may know what is it that you do love, desire, and chuse above all things in the world, and what is the general bent and inclination of your heart and will?

W. I do not know my heart.

S. What would you ask of God, if he should say, ask any one thing, and thou shalt have it?

W. Christ, I think; but still I am afraid lest this should be from love unto myself, and not unto the person of Christ.

S. An holy self-love you ought to have, and that is not inconsistent with predominant love to the person of Christ.

W. How may I know it is holy self-love (that God approveth of) that moveth me to be willing to accept of Christ?

S. If you desire Christ to make you holy, as well as to make you happy, and to free you from the power and dominion, as well as from the punishment and damnation of your sin.

W. If there were no hell, yet I would not sin against the Lord?

S. You have made an answer to your own inquiry.

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Christ, to take down the power of sin, it would not have been so strong as yet it is, and the power of sin makes me question the truth of grace?

S. Strength of sin might argue weakness of grace, but not the nullity of it; because it might rage, when it doth not reign.

W. That I would know, for if sin reign, you will say, I must not go?

S. True, but if you can say with St. Paul, Rom. vii. 15. "That which I do, I allow not: for what I would, that I do not; but what I hate, that do I," ver. 19. "For the good that I would, I do not: but the evil which I would not, that I do." You may then conclude with him, verse 20. "Now, if I do that which I would not, it is no more I that do it, but sin that dwelleth (he saith not reigneth) in me." And it rages, when it doth not reign, you have the more need to go unto the Lord's supper, that sin, this usurping tyrant (not your acknowledged Lord) might be taken down.

W. But sin hath great power in my thoughts, for not only vain, but blasphemous, thoughts are frequently crowding into my mind, and I cannot remove them?

S. That they have power over your thoughts, is your sin; but that they have not such power over your will, that proves your grace; for you would remove them when you cannot; and whether they be injected by the devil, or do arise from your own heart, if grieved for, groaned under, and striven against, it is no otherwise with you, than with many others of God's dearest children.

W. I have long neglected Christ, now it is too late, to what end then should I go unto this ordinance?

S. Who told you it was too late? where do you read it? The damned in hell might say, It is too late, but not you; you might have him, if you would; and may have him, if you will: And have him indeed, because you are willing. And it is not what you have been, but what you are, and would be, that you must judge your state by.

W. But if the day of grace be past with me, and the door of mercy shut against me, it is too late; how then should I be sealed in this ordinance unto the day of redemption?

S. The day of grace is not past with him, that would fain have grace above all earthly riches, nor is the door of mercy shut against him, that doth set open the door of his heart for Christ the King of glory to enter in; and doth importunately pray for the fruits of the Spirit.

W. But, alas! I cannot pray, how then should I receive?

S. Though you cannot word your desires, yet you can cry to God, and nothing will still you but a Christ. As the infant cannot ask, yet crieth for the breast. Some might utter words in prayer and not pray, and you might want words, and yet pray fervently, acceptably unto God: for prayer doth not consist in the exercise of parts, memory, &c. But of grace.

W. I cannot cry to God, my eyes are dry, and cannot drop a tear sometimes, when I am confessing my sin, though so many and heinous, when others

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can shed many tears for one sin, I cannot shed one tear for many sins?

S. Is it so with you but sometimes? Besides, as there may be, tears in eyes, when there is no sorrow in the heart; so when your eye is dry, your heart may grieve: An hypocrite, as he may have more words, so he may have more tears in prayer than a true child of God.

W. How then may I judge of my prayers, when I want these outward signs of sorrow, &c.?

S. By your inward frame of heart, when you cannot shed a tear, you feel your heart burdened with and rising in hatred against your sin; and when you beg for Christ and grace; you find your heart sincerely reaching forth after both Christ and grace.

W. I do pray indeed, and hear, that I may have Christ, but I doubt all this is in hypocrisy; and that all my duties are the service of an hypocrite: And what did Judas get by eating with Christ?

S. If you delight to do a duty so, that no man might know that you did it, and that when you be with others in holy ordinances, you find you had rather be affected, and not seem to be so to others, than seem to be affected, and not to be so before God, where is your hypocrisy? Besides, if you do your duties from a right principle, love to, and fear of God, in a right manner, viz. humbly, believingly, fervently, in the name of Christ, and for a right end, that you may glorify God, have communion with him, be made more like unto him, that you may have more love to him,

and more power and strength against your sin, you are sincere, and not an hypocrite in your duties.

W. But sometimes I find a secret content in my heart, that men take notice of the outward signs of inward affections, and that when the outward signs are more than my inward affections; is not that hypocrisy?

S. Yes it is, and much to be lamented and opposed; mourn so if you can, that none but God might perceive it, except when it might be more for the glory of God, and the edification of another, that your mourning should be manifested rather than concealed.

W. May such a duty then be accepted of God, that is done in such hypocrisy?

S. Such a hypocrite, a sincere Christian may sometimes be, and is; for as there is something of unbelief in one that hath faith in Christ, and something of pride in one that is humble, &c. so there is something of hypocrisy in every one that is sincere: for in nothing are we perfect as to degrees, while in this life. Therefore as you must not conclude, that your prayers and duties are not accepted of God, because there are some actings of unbelief and pride in them: So neither because there is something of hypocrisy mingled with them, when (as it is said) your principle, and manner, and end, in the main be right.

W. I doubt whether the principle of my duties be love to God, or only a natural conscience: and if I should go to the sacrament, and not from

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S. And I pray you take heed that at no time you do absent yourself from duty, against the dictates of a sanctified enlightened conscience.

W. I pray to God I may not: but speak unto my doubts.

S. You may perform duty from a principle of love, when it is not from a sense of love; when a natural conscience is the principle, it puts you upon the duty, but gives you no strength to perform the duty; but the Spirit of God doth both.

Natural conscience is satisfied, if the duty be done: but you are not satisfied, except God be enjoyed in the duty. Natural conscience puts on to duty in time of temporal, or for fear of eternal punishments, but you pray, &c. that you may please God, have communion with him, and be delivered from the filth and power of sin. When natural conscience only is the principle, a duty is done with much backwardness of heart, conscience hales and drags the sinner to his knees; but you love it, and delight in duty, or are grieved if you do not. When natural conscience only is the principle, if a man can get an excuse which will silence conscience, the duty with gladness is omitted: But if you are kept (though by lawful cause) from a duty, it is some grief and trouble to your soul, and nothing but what is weighty, judged by you to be a duty also, shall divert you from the ordinance of God. Are you not yet satisfied in this, that you may go unto the Lord's supper?

W. I have purposed to you the chiefest grounds

of my doubts and fears, and for this present, in some measure, have some hopes that God hath done some special work upon my heart?

S. Then I hope you will make conscience of this duty, that it may be promoted, and carried on in your soul.

W. I shall further consider of what you have said, and shall beg of God by his holy Spirit, that I may know the things that are freely given (if given) to me of God: and if I shall by further searching of my heart, and prayer unto God be convinced that it is my duty, I will no more absent myself?

S. I should rejoice to see you there.

W. But I find my heart is too slight and careless in what I know to be my duty. I would therefore understand how I may get my heart to be diligent and serious in preparing for it?

S. When you are to go to this ordinance, endeavour to confess your sins, and to pray for pardon, and for Christ, and grace, as earnestly as you would do if you were then to die: prepare as you would do, if Christ himself were to deliver it to you: as if a man could look into your heart; as if God should strike you dead with the bread in your mouth, or with the cup in your hands, if you come unworthily; as if it were the last time you should receive it, and go and stand at God's tribunal when you have done: as if a soul that had been damned for profaning of the blood of Christ, should come unto you, and tell you what he is suffering in hell for this sin: as if Christ should call to you from heaven, and mark you

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out, and make you know, if you come unpreparedly.

(Page 86, &c.) But this is not to discourage you from the duty, but to quicken your heart to greater diligence in order thereunto.

W. How must I then prepare myself?

S. For this I refer you to the book itself, (see page 102, &c.) and to the former dialogue.

W. I shall not any longer keep you from your other businesses?

S. The God of heaven guide you in this work, and smile upon your soul, when you shall be present at his table.

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*A Dialogue between one Believer that hath Assurance, and another that hath Hope, and another that is under the doubtings of the love of God, and of good by the Sacrament, as they come away from the Lord's table.*

Assurance,

**W**AS not this he that came from Edom, with died garments from Bozrah, whom we have seen glorious in his apparel, travelling in the greatness of his strength, mighty to save us from our sins, that were mighty to condemn us?

Hope. This is he, who being red in his apparel, having his garments dyed with blood, with his own blood, with his own hearts blood, doth save us from our scarlet crimson sins.

Assur. Was not this he whom Judas did betray, whom Peter did deny, whom all forsook, whom

the Jews did crucify, whom the soldiers pierced, that suffered so much from men, and from devils, and from God himself?

**Hope.** This is he who (I trust) was delivered for our offences, and was raised again for our justification. This is he who being in the form of God, thought it no robbery to be equal with God, but made himself of no reputation, and took upon him the form of a servant, and was made in the likeness of man, and being found in fashion as a man, he humbled himself, and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross.

**Doubt.** Certainly this was a righteous man, the Son of God, willing and able to save to the uttermost, all those that come unto God by him, who once died upon the cross, but ever lives to make intercession for them.

**Hope.** We have seen that the Prince of Life did die, the Lord of glory exposed to open shame: We have seen his blood streaming down, and thro' the hole made in his side, have looked into his heart: What did you see in his blessed heart?

**Assur.** I saw a sight of love, a fire, a flame of love. When for our sins I saw this blood flowing from his heart, I saw love still abiding there; my Lord would part with his most precious blood, but not with his love unto his people; I saw, I was not only engraven upon the palms of his hands, or set as a seal upon his arms, but I was pourtrayed upon his heart. The high-priest that was a type of Christ, did bear the names of the twelve tribes of Israel in the breast-plate, in or upon twelve precious stones: but I did see that our great

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High-Priest, doth bear the names of his elect engraven in his precious heart: and when I read my name amongst the rest, what joy and comfort filled my soul, I am not able to express: His love was stronger than death, the coals thereof were as coals of fire, which had a most vehement flame: and me thought, when I drew near unto it, I felt my heart began to warm. All the waters of affliction, and sufferings, and sorrow, which he endured, could not quench his love: For he was resolved to ransom and redeem all that were given to him of the Father.

Hope. And do not the thoughts of this blood that was shed, and of the virtue and efficacy thereof, exceedingly delight your soul?

Assur. When I consider that this blood which was shed upon the cross, is pleading for me in heaven; that by this blood, God is reconciled, sin expiated, death and the devil conquered, it makes me to cry out, Never love like this! never any like this!

Hope. In this God manifested his love unto us, that he sent his only begotten Son into the world to die, that we might live through him?

Assur. Herein God commendeth his love to us that while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us! And this love of God unto my soul, it is sweet, it is exceeding sweet, beyond the sweetness of the honey, or the honey-comb.

Hope. His love is better than wine! A bundle of myrrh is my beloved unto me, he shall lie all night between my breasts!

Assur. As the apple-tree among the trees of

the wood, so is my beloved among the sons: I sat down under his shadow with great delight, and his fruit was sweet unto my taste: he brought me to the banqueting house, and his banner over me was love.

**Doubt.** O stay me with flaggons, comfort me with apples, for I am sick of love!

**Assur.** Thou hast ravished my heart, my Lord my Saviour, thou hast ravished my heart, while with an eye of faith, I have seen thy blood streaming from thy heart, to wash me from my sins.

**Doubt.** With what admiring thoughts of the love of God, do these come away from the supper of the Lord?

**Assur.** Oh the heighth, the depth, the length, the breadth of the love of God! we know it, we know it; and yet indeed it passeth knowledge.

**Hope.** By the death and resurrection of this crucified Lord, we have a lively hope of an incorruptible crown: he was crowned with thorns, that we might have a crown of glory?

**Doubt.** O Lord, how dull and dead am I, who have been there, where these have been, but have not found what they have found!

**Hope.** Why do you weep?

**Assur.** Do you weep for joy or grief?

**Doubt.** Who can but weep, when God doth frown? You may say, his loving kindness is better than life; and I can say, his frowns are worse than death.

**Hope.** Did you not find Christ attempting to get into your heart, to come down from the cross into your heart?

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**Doubt.** He knocked indeed, but I was sleeping.

**Hope.** Did you find no stirrings of affections when Christ's hand was upon the lock, and put his hand into the hole of the door of your heart?

**Doubt.** He put in his hand by the hole of the door, and my bowels were moved for him.

**Hope.** Why did you not set open then the everlasting gates of your soul, that this King of glory might have entered in?

**Doubt.** I rose to open to him, whom I desire to love, and my hands dropped with myrrh, and my fingers with sweet smelling myrrh, upon the handles of the lock.

**Hope.** How was it then you missed him?

**Doubt.** At first I was not heedful to let him in, whereby I grieved him, when I made him stand without; afterwards I rose to open to him, whom I would love, but he had withdrawn himself; wo is me, he was withdrawn; my soul failed when he spake: I sought him in every part of the duty afterwards, but I could not find him; I called after him, but he gave me no answer.

**Assur.** O Lord, what am I, a vile and worthless sinner, that thou revealed thy heart and love to me, when it is secret unto others?

**Hope.** I began to be dejected, when I saw how short I came of your joy and comfort; but when I see his doubts and fears, I bless the Lord, who hath given me some hopes of his favour, and his love.

**Doubt.** How is it that you come away with such hopes of mercy to your soul?

**Hope.** When I knew my sin and misery, and the mercy of God to poor sinners, through the merits of his Son; when I did read God's invitations and commands, that I should come to Christ, and promises of pardon if I did; and in the sacrament have seen God setting to his seal, I willingly cast away my sin, and cast myself down at the feet of mercy; resting upon the merits of Christ, I did, and do hope that God will not cast away my soul from him, nor exclude me from his kingdom.

**Doubt.** Then you have not yet got assurance of the love of God, nor a full persualion of God's mercy; in the pardon of your sins, and salvation of your soul?

**Hope.** No, because though I do not question the truth of God's promise, nor his willingness to receive repenting sinners, yet I am not without doubts and jealousies of the truth of my faith, repentance, &c.

**Doubt.** And yet you can hope for heaven?

**Hope.** Yes, because it is pleasing unto God, that we should trust in him, when we are not sure of our interest in him, and to see sinners hoping in his mercy.

**Assur.** And yet you do hope, your hope is true?

**Hope.** Yes, because I find it puts me on to purify my heart.

**Doubt.** And how is it that you come away with such assurance of the love of God, and eternal life?

**Assur.** When I had found the truth of my faith in Christ, love to God, and hatred unto sin, and

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the promises that God had made to such in Christ, I did, and do believe, that as surely as I did eat the bread, and drink the wine, so surely hath God pardoned my sins, and will save my soul.

Doubt. And doth this alone give you this evidence of your title to his kingdom, and fill you with this joy?

Assur. No, but moreover I find the Spirit of God bearing witness to, and with my spirit, that it was thus with me; and oh, how sweet was Christ then to my soul!

Doubt. When did you find your heart thus raised in the apprehensions of God's love to you?

Assur. When I saw the bread broken, and heard the minister say, Thus was Christ's body broken for you; and saw him pour out the wine, and heard him say, Thus was the blood of Christ shed for you; and when he did distribute both, and I did take and eat, did take and drink, I did believe that God was really, though invisibly, dealing forth his Son, and all his benefits to me, as well as unto others: And I was enabled to apply him particularly to myself, and take him as my own; then, oh then, my heart was warmed with love, and filled with joy.

Doubt. When else?

Assur. When the congregation was singing forth the praises of the Lord, my soul being satisfied as with marrow and fatness, my mouth, my heart, my all, did praise him; and now my love, my faith, my joy, my sorrow for my sin, were stirring in my heart.

Doubt. And how do you know that this is

true and spiritual joy, and not such which an hypocrite might have at the table of the Lord?

**Assur.** Because I find it doth engage me to inward and universal holiness, inflames my heart with love to God and Christ, increased my hatred to my sin, and makes me more watchful against it, and makes my soul to long after full and perfect enjoyment of God in glory.

**Doubt.** I am glad, and do rejoice in your mercy, while I must bewail my own unprofitableness, even at the table of the Lord, I must go home and eat my bread with a sorrowful heart, and mingle my drink with tears, while you can go and eat your bread with a cheerful spirit?

**Assur.** Nay, but go and examine your soul, what good and benefit you have received by this ordinance, and give to God the glory of it.

**Doubt.** Might one that hath not got assurance of the love of God, nor been filled with joy, conclude he hath got good by the Lord's supper?

**Hope.** Yes, or else I must go home and weep for this, as well as you.

**Doubt.** How doth that appear?

**Hope.** Because God doth work variously upon divers persons, and variously upon the same person at divers times. Sometimes he breaks the heart for sin, and reserves his comforts for another time: if you do not find your heart enflamed with love, to and filled with joy, yet if you do find your heart rise more in hatred unto sin, and to be grieved for it, and to resolve and watch against it, you have received benefit by this ordinance.

**Doubt.** Then I must take heed of the strata-

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gems of the devil, that, as he might not cause me to conclude, I have that which I have not: So neither to deny that I have not that, which through mercy, God hath given to me?

Hope. That will be your wisdom, because it will be your way to get more from God, by being thankful for a little, God will another time give you peace and comfort, if now you will give him thanks, that you have wept for your sin, and been grieved for the same.

Doubt. O Lord, my heart begins to warm, I thing the sacrament may work and affect my heart, after I am come away, though I was dull when I was there?

Assur. So it may, and so I have sometimes found it, though to day God hath wonderfully smiled upon such a vile sinner as I am.

Hope. I would advise you to take heed, that you do not conclude, That you have no benefit at all, because you have not so much as you see other Christians to have, or that you have it not in that particular, or kind that you looked for; or though you did not sensibly perceive it in the very act of receiving.

Doubt. But what may be the cause that I have found no more of God in the time of this ordinance?

Hope. It may be you were too slight in your preparations for this duty; or if enlarged in them, you trusted too much to them, and less to Christ, then you should have done; or were not watchful in the time of the ordinance, or do too much favour some peculiar sin; and God withholds what

you expected, that you might mend that with which he is offended.

Doubt. This will be the mercy, if I missed of comfort, that I may have less of sin: and shall desire of the Lord, that I may find some good by the ordinance, and your discourse: now I do go in.

Assur. Say, one word more and that is, That we all remember the obligations that do lie upon us, to walk suitable to the privileges we are made partakers of by the death of Christ.

Hope. That is well remembered, for we are apt to forget to make returns to God, when we have received great things from him.

Doubt. That will do well, for then it may be I might feel more the efficacy of this ordinance than yet I have done?

Assur. Yes, you may, and therefore let us all consider, and bear it upon our hearts, where we have been this day, and how we have renewed our covenant with God, and that his vows are upon us, and his eyes do observe how we shall walk, and live, after we have had, or do hope for peace and joy from him; and that we watch each other, that where any of us fail, the other may reprove in love and restore him with a spirit of meekness.

Hope. All this will be needful.

Assur. The Lord enable us by his grace, to discharge what God commands, that we may expect what he doth promise in his word, and hath sealed to us in his sacrament. 6 JY 55

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